

February 2007

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Committed, Sustained Leadership Needed to Continue Progress





Highlights of [GAO-07-407](#), a report to congressional requesters

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Why GAO Did This Study

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is responsible for the operation, maintenance, renovation, and new construction of the Capitol Hill complex, including the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, and the Senate and House Office Buildings. In 2003, at the request of Congress, GAO issued a management review of AOC that contained recommendations designed to help AOC become more strategic and accountable. Subsequently, Congress directed GAO to monitor AOC's progress in implementing recommendations. This is the fourth status report on AOC's progress and summarizes GAO's assessment of AOC's overall progress and remaining actions in becoming more strategic and accountable, including AOC's responses to specific recommendations GAO made in January 2003 and subsequently. To assess AOC's progress, GAO analyzed AOC documents; interviewed AOC officials; and relied on the results of related GAO reviews, including reviews of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC).

AOC generally agreed with GAO's assessment of its progress, but noted that 2 additional recommendations—1 on financial management practices and 1 on collecting worker safety data—should be considered implemented. GAO acknowledges AOC's efforts in these areas, but maintains that further steps are necessary to fully implement these recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-407.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Terrell Dorn at (202) 512-6923 or dornt@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

AOC has made progress in becoming more strategic and accountable, but critical actions are needed to sustain and build on this progress. To date, AOC has filled key leadership positions, revised its strategic plan, improved communication, and continued initiatives to improve internal controls and accountability. AOC is thus establishing a foundation for becoming more strategic and accountable. However, completing the transition to new leadership—including the transition to a new Architect of the Capitol (a position that is now vacant)—and other actions remain to bring about lasting improvements in performance. For example, AOC must integrate nine new managers into the agency while ensuring its continued progress. In addition, the Chief Operating Officer faces the challenge of performing the Architect of the Capitol's responsibilities and his own during the CVC project's completion and AOC's management transition. Furthermore, although AOC has revised its strategic plan to better focus on its mission and goals, it has not determined whether it can better deliver the services that support its mission and goals through outsourcing or in-house resources. Finally, a continued focus on communication and other areas that are key to greater internal control and accountability—including financial, information technology, and project management—is needed to sustain and further AOC's progress to date. For example, full implementation of AOC's cost accounting system—a key financial management initiative—is needed to more accurately track facilities management cost measures. Improvements in project management could be achieved, in part, by applying lessons learned in managing the CVC project.

Appendix I of this report summarizes AOC's progress on recommendations that GAO has made since January 2003 to help AOC establish a strong strategic management and accountability framework. This year, AOC has implemented 21 recommendations. For example, AOC implemented 6 of the strategic management recommendations, including the development of congressional protocols and the involvement of stakeholders in developing the revised strategic plan. For project management, AOC implemented 7 recommendations, including the development of performance measures. Implementing these 21 recommendations brings the total number of implemented or closed recommendations to 43 out of 64.

AOC's Progress in Implementing GAO's Recommendations

Issue area	Implemented or closed recommendations	Total recommendations
Strategic management	13	14
Human capital management	7	9
Financial management	1	4
Information technology management	3	7
Project management	9	13
Facilities management	0	2
Worker safety	5	8
Capitol Power Plant management	1	3
Recycling	4	4
Total	43	64

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Contents

Letter		1
	Results in Brief	3
	Background	5
	AOC Is Making Progress in Becoming More Strategic and Accountable, but Completing the Management Transition and Other Critical Actions Remain	7
	Agency Comments and Our Evaluation	18
Appendix I	Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations	20
	Strategic Management	20
	Human Capital Management	26
	Financial Management	31
	Information Technology Management	37
	Project Management	44
	Facilities Management	49
	Worker Safety	51
	Capitol Power Plant Management	55
	Recycling	57
Appendix II	GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments	59
Tables		
	Table 1: Current Status of Recommendations on Strategic Management	21
	Table 2: Current Status of Recommendations on Human Capital Management	26
	Table 3: Current Status of Recommendations on Financial Management	32
	Table 4: Current Status of Recommendations on Information Technology Management	38
	Table 5: Current Status of Recommendations on Project Management	45
	Table 6: Current Status of Recommendations on Facilities Management	49
	Table 7: Current Status of Recommendations on Worker Safety	52
	Table 8: Current Status of Recommendations on CPP Management	55
	Table 9: Current Status of Recommendations on Recycling	57

Figure**Figure 1: New Senior-Level Managers at AOC since January 2006**

8

Abbreviations

AOC	Architect of the Capitol
BSMO	Business Systems Modernization Office
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CPP	Capitol Power Plant
CVC	Capitol Visitor Center
EA	enterprise architecture
FMIS	Facilities Management Information System
FTE	full-time equivalent
ICS	Inventory Control System
IRB	Investment Review Board
IT	information technology
JHA	job hazard analysis
MOR	Management Operations Reporting
OAP	Office of the Attending Physician
OIRM	Office of Information and Resource Management
OOC	Office of Compliance
PRB	Project Review Board
SDLC	systems development life-cycle
SHEC	Safety, Health, and Environment Council

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

February 28, 2007

The Honorable Mary L. Landrieu
Chairman
The Honorable Wayne Allard
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chair
The Honorable Zach Wamp
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
The Honorable Bob Bennett
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is responsible for the operations, maintenance, renovation, and new construction of the Capitol Hill complex, including such high-profile and historic buildings as the U.S. Capitol Building, Senate and House Office Buildings, Library of Congress, and Supreme Court. AOC also is managing the construction of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC)—the largest incremental growth in the history of the Capitol complex. Preserving and modernizing these buildings while meeting the needs of Congress and the visiting public poses challenges for AOC. In 2001, Congress raised concerns about management shortcomings at AOC and asked us to review the management of AOC's operations. In response, we issued a report in January 2003 containing recommendations that were designed to help AOC establish a strong strategic management and accountability framework.¹ Congress subsequently directed us to

¹GAO, *Architect of the Capitol: Management and Accountability Framework Needed for Organizational Transformation*, [GAO-03-231](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 17, 2003).

monitor AOC's progress in implementing these recommendations. This report is the fourth in a series of status reports on AOC's progress.² In our previous report on AOC's progress, we emphasized the need for improvement in communication with external stakeholders and in development of internal controls and stressed the importance of leadership support for these improvements.

To continue our efforts in monitoring AOC's progress, this report includes an assessment of AOC's overall progress and remaining actions in becoming more strategic and accountable, including responses to specific recommendations we made in January 2003 and subsequently. The recommendations involve nine areas—strategic management, human capital management, financial management, information technology (IT) management, project management, facilities management, worker safety, Capitol Power Plant (CPP) management, and recycling.

To assess AOC's progress in implementing our recommendations and identify remaining actions, we analyzed documents related to AOC's actions and interviewed AOC officials responsible for implementing the recommendations. Our analysis also relies on the results of other work we conducted during this past year—including reviews of the extent to which AOC outsources operations,³ AOC's procedures to estimate project costs,⁴ and AOC's efforts to improve the CPP's utility tunnels⁵—as well as our ongoing oversight of the construction of the CVC.⁶ We conducted our work from September 2006 through February 2007 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

²GAO, *Architect of the Capitol: Management Challenges Remain*, [GAO-06-290](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 21, 2006); *Architect of the Capitol: Midyear Status Report on Implementation of Management Review Recommendations*, [GAO-04-966](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 31, 2004); and *Architect of the Capitol: Status Report on Implementation of Management Review Recommendations*, [GAO-04-299](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 30, 2004).

³In September 2006, we briefed the House Appropriations Committee on AOC's outsourcing efforts.

⁴In June 2006, we briefed the Senate Appropriations Committee on AOC's procedures for estimating project costs and a comparison of AOC's and other agencies' project costs.

⁵GAO, *Capitol Power Plant Utility Tunnels*, [GAO-07-227R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 16, 2006).

⁶Since February 2006, we have testified at nine hearings on the status of the CVC project. Our most recent testimony was in February 2007. See GAO, *Capitol Visitor Center: Update on Status of Project's Schedule and Cost as of February 16, 2007*, [GAO-07-507T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 16, 2007).

Results in Brief

AOC has made progress in becoming a more strategic and accountable organization, but critical actions remain for the agency to sustain and build on this progress. Specifically, AOC has filled seven existing leadership positions—including the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)—and two new leadership positions established to help AOC better meet the needs of its customers. In addition, AOC revised its strategic plan, improved communication with congressional stakeholders, and continued initiatives to improve financial management, IT management, and project management. Through these actions, AOC is establishing a foundation for becoming more strategic and accountable. However, completing the transition to new leadership—including the transition to a new Architect of the Capitol (a position that is now vacant)—and other actions are needed to bring about lasting improvements in performance. For example, AOC's new managers enhance its ability to advance the agency's strategic transformation, but AOC must integrate these new managers into the agency while ensuring its continued progress. Furthermore, the agency must sustain this progress despite the vacancy in the position of the Architect of the Capitol (Architect). The COO is performing the Architect's responsibilities in addition to his own; however, it will be challenging for one person to fulfill the critical roles of the Architect and the COO in completing the CVC project and continuing AOC's progress in becoming more strategic and accountable. In addition, although AOC has revised its strategic plan to better focus on its mission and goals, it has not identified how best to deliver the services that support its mission and goals and has not determined whether its workforce has the skills and capacity to deliver those services. Finally, a continued focus on improving communication and other areas, including financial management, IT management, and project management, is needed to ensure that improvements already made in these areas are sustained and further progress is made. For example, sustained commitment is required to fully implement the cost accounting system to more effectively track costs across all of AOC's operations. For project management, AOC's management of the CVC project provides lessons learned that can be applied to all projects, such as the importance of communicating with stakeholders throughout all phases of the project.

Appendix I provides a summary of AOC's progress on recommendations that we have made in January 2003 and subsequently. Over the last year, AOC has implemented 21 recommendations. For example, AOC implemented 6 of our strategic management recommendations by involving congressional and other stakeholders in the development of its revised strategic plan, finalizing procedures to facilitate communication with congressional stakeholders, and revising its employee feedback

process manual to establish a process for regularly collecting and reporting employee feedback information, among other things. In the project management area, AOC implemented 7 recommendations by taking several steps, such as developing tools to communicate priorities and progress of projects, informing congressional stakeholders on how and why specific projects are submitted for funding, and establishing project-management-related performance measures. Implementing these 21 recommendations brings the total number of implemented or closed recommendations to 43 out of 64, or 67 percent. These 64 recommendations were designed to help AOC establish a strong strategic management and accountability framework and were made in nine areas—strategic management, human capital management, financial management, IT management, project management, facilities management, worker safety, CPP management, and recycling.⁷

In responding to a draft of this report, AOC generally agreed with our assessment of the agency's overall progress, but noted that the following 2 additional recommendations—1 on institutionalizing financial management practices to support budgeting, financial, and program management and 1 on developing a rigorous approach for collecting worker safety data—should be considered implemented. According to AOC officials, the agency has made significant progress over the past year and installed a solid foundation for further improvements. The officials also recognized that continued focused attention to the agency's improvement initiatives is essential to maintaining progress. For our recommendation on financial management practices, AOC suggested that the two remaining actions for this recommendation—fully developing and implementing an appropriate risk-based internal control framework and cost accounting and management reporting initiatives—are addressed in the other financial management recommendations. We maintain that these two remaining actions are key strategies for institutionalizing internal control and accountability and strengthening and supporting effective budgeting, financial, and performance management at AOC and are necessary to fulfill this recommendation. For the recommendation on collecting worker safety data, AOC officials noted that they believe their current practices—including conducting biennial focus groups, conducting daily shop safety meetings, and establishing a safety hazards hotline—sufficiently meet the requirements of this recommendation. While we

⁷Although this report draws on our ongoing work on the CVC, we did not include the status of the specific recommendations made to AOC on the management of the CVC project.

recognize that these initiatives provide the agency with some information on worker safety, these initiatives do not provide a rigorous and confidential approach for collecting employee perceptions of AOC's safety climate, such as perceptions of management commitment, discipline policies, and hazard corrections. This lack of confidentiality can impede the quality of information collected. AOC also made clarifying and technical comments that we addressed in the text of this report.

Background

AOC is responsible for the operation, maintenance, renovation, and new construction of the buildings and grounds of the Capitol Hill complex. Organizationally, AOC consists of nine separate jurisdictions responsible for the day-to-day operations of the U.S. Capitol Building, Capitol Grounds, Senate Office Buildings, House Office Buildings, Library of Congress Buildings and Grounds, Supreme Court Buildings and Grounds, CPP, Botanic Garden, and Security Programs. AOC also has centralized staff that perform administrative and project management functions. AOC has managed major projects throughout the Capitol Hill complex and is currently managing the construction of the CVC. The historic nature and high profile of many of these buildings create a complex environment for AOC to carry out its mission; AOC must balance the diverse and sometimes divergent needs of congressional leaders, committees, members, and staffs as well as the visiting public.

Congress has raised concerns about management shortcomings at AOC.⁸ For example, in 2001, the Senate Appropriations Committee cited several management issues, including a lack of strategic planning, inadequate financial and project management controls, and an unacceptably high level of worker injuries. Congress subsequently directed GAO to conduct a review of the management of AOC's operations⁹ and, later, to monitor AOC's progress in addressing recommendations that arose from the review.¹⁰

Our January 2003 report contained 35 recommendations designed to assist AOC in transforming itself into a more strategic and accountable organization. The recommendations were in seven areas, including

⁸Sen. Rep. No. 107-37, at 28-29 (2001) and H.R. Conf. Rep. No. 107-148, at 73 (2001).

⁹Pub. L. No. 107-68, 115 Stat. 560, 580 (2001), 2 U.S.C. § 1801 note.

¹⁰H.R. Conf. Rep. No. 108-10, at 1225 (2003), accompanying Pub. L. No. 108-7 (2003).

strategic management, human capital management, financial management, project management, IT management, worker safety, and recycling. The report recognized this transformation as a long-term effort that involves a fundamental change in AOC's culture. For example, AOC faces the challenge of how best to marshal its jurisdiction-based resources to address the strategic planning and other functional issues that cut across the organization. Changes of this magnitude require the sustained commitment of the agency's top leadership.¹¹

Subsequent reports on AOC's progress that we issued in 2004 and 2006 concluded that, while AOC was making progress on all recommendations, substantial work remained to achieve the goal of becoming more strategic and accountable, and that sustained commitment and assertive involvement by AOC's leadership would be key to instilling long-term management improvements. Specifically, our last report in this series, issued in February 2006, concluded that the agency had not addressed two issues—communication with external stakeholders and development of internal controls—that affect a wide range of AOC operations, including cost accounting, procurement, and information security. Furthermore, leadership support is vital to ensure that needed improvements are implemented and sustained, but key leadership positions—including those of the COO, CFO, Chief Administrative Officer, and Director of CPP—were vacant and the term of the agency head, the Architect, was due to expire in less than a year. Therefore, it was critical for AOC to quickly fill the vacant management positions with qualified people so AOC would have a cohesive management team in place in preparation for a change in the agency's top leadership. These reports and two others on the CPP included assessments of two additional areas—facilities management and the CPP—and 29 additional recommendations for AOC, bringing the total number of recommendations to 64.¹²

¹¹[GAO-03-231](#).

¹²The 29 additional recommendations include 4 issued in January 2004, 13 issued in August 2004, 9 issued in February 2006, and 3 issued on the management of CPP. The recommendations to improve the management of CPP were issued in April 2005 and February 2006. See GAO, *Capitol Power Plant: Actions Needed to Improve Operating Efficiency* (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 8, 2005), which was issued as an unnumbered correspondence; and *Architect of the Capitol: Addressing Staffing and Training Issues Is Important for Efficient and Safe West Refrigeration Plant Operations*, [GAO-06-321R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 10, 2006) for the CPP recommendations.

In addition, we and AOC recently worked together to identify lessons learned from the ongoing CVC project, including practices that could be applied to AOC's future projects and practices that could have been done better or differently. The lessons covered four areas—acquisition planning and policy; decision making, coordination, and communication; project and contract management; and worksite safety and security—and included such lessons as the importance of communicating and coordinating with all relevant stakeholders and identifying and mitigating risks early in the development of a major construction project.

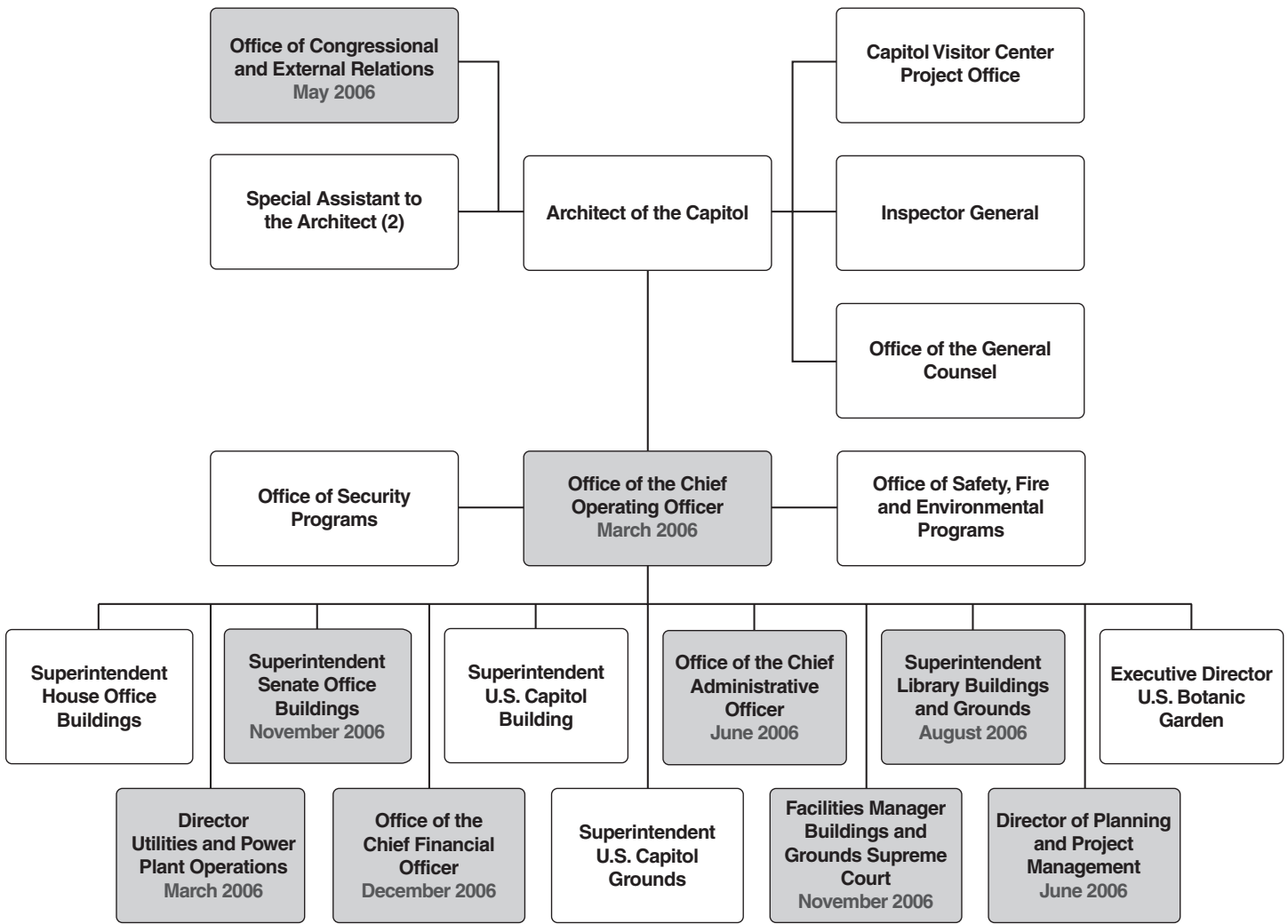
AOC Is Making Progress in Becoming More Strategic and Accountable, but Completing the Management Transition and Other Critical Actions Remain

During the last year, AOC has filled nine key leadership positions, revised its strategic plan to better align its activities with its mission and goals, and continued initiatives to improve internal controls and accountability. These actions have furthered AOC's progress in establishing a foundation for becoming a more strategic and accountable organization. It is now important for AOC to continue to build on this foundation by transitioning to new management; determining how best to provide services to AOC's customers; and making further improvements in communication, financial management, IT management, and project management.

Leadership Continuity and Planning Are Key to New Management Transition

The nine leadership positions that AOC has filled during the last year are vital to sustain improvements that have already been achieved, support further transformation efforts, and maintain operations during the transition to a new Architect. These new managers comprise 9 of the 20 managers that report directly to the Architect or the COO. (See fig. 1.) Most of these positions, including those of the CFO and the Chief Administrative Officer, were vacant because of retirements and resignations. To help AOC better meet the needs of its customers, AOC also created and filled two new leadership positions—the Director of Congressional and External Relations and the Director of Planning and Project Management. In addition to these nine positions, AOC has filled seven other management positions over the past year, such as the Deputy Director for the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Deputy Director of the Project Management Division, and Director of the Information Technology Division.

Figure 1: New Senior-Level Managers at AOC since January 2006



 Shaded box indicates position was filled in 2006

Source: Architect of the Capitol.

Note: The Office of the Attending Physician (OAP) is organizationally aligned under AOC and reports administratively to the Architect (e.g., time and attendance). The OAP receives direction from the Attending Physician (a separate and distinct officer of Congress) and is not an AOC senior manager.

While these new managers can bring new energy and ideas to the agency, the introduction of so many new managers within a short period makes it challenging to integrate them into AOC while sustaining the progress made thus far. The turnover in AOC's senior leadership over the past year

resulted in a loss of leadership continuity, institutional knowledge, and expertise—a loss that could adversely affect AOC’s ability to continue its progress, at least in the short term. AOC has taken steps to mitigate these factors and integrate the new managers into the agency by, for example, holding weekly senior leadership meetings and monthly detailed briefings on various AOC construction projects. These managers are also part of AOC’s senior executive performance management system, which links the managers’ performance plans to AOC’s mission-critical goals and holds the managers accountable for results. AOC officials also noted that 4 of the 9 new managers have been promoted from within the agency and have the institutional knowledge and expertise gained from several years of experience at AOC.

The current vacancy in the Architect’s position further challenges AOC’s ability to sustain progress. The process for hiring the new Architect is in the early stages, and according to the COO, hiring the previous Architect took over a year.¹³ Until a new Architect is in place, the COO is authorized to act as the Architect and is assuming the Architect’s duties along with his own.¹⁴ In general, the Architect’s responsibilities include overall management of AOC, support and representation on boards and commissions—including the Capitol Police Board—and management of the CVC project, while the COO’s responsibilities involve developing the agency’s strategic and performance plans, proposing organizational and staffing changes needed to carry out AOC’s mission, and reviewing and directing the operational functions of AOC. The COO identified the management of the CVC project as one of the agency’s major challenges to becoming more strategic and accountable, because the CVC requires significant management attention that could otherwise be focused on AOC’s transformation initiatives. The management responsibilities for the CVC project could increase if, as scheduled, the CVC reaches a critical juncture in the next year as the construction phase ends and operations begin. For example, before the CVC becomes operational, the roles and

¹³Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 1801, the process for hiring a new Architect involves the establishment of a commission composed of the Speaker of the House; the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and House, and the Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members of the House Oversight Committee, the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, and the Senate and House Appropriations Committees. The commission recommends at least three individuals to the President for the position of the Architect. An Architect is then appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate for a term of 10 years.

¹⁴2 U.S.C. § 1804.

responsibilities for managing CVC operations, including those of AOC, will need to be determined. Furthermore, the CVC project executive is planning to leave the agency in March 2007, which is likely to place additional responsibilities on the COO. Given these factors, it will be challenging for one person to fulfill the critical roles of the Architect and the COO in completing the CVC and continuing AOC's progress in becoming more strategic and accountable.

AOC has begun preparing for the transition to a new Architect by determining how to support the COO in the absence of an Architect and establishing a transition team for bringing in a new Architect. To support the COO, AOC has begun identifying individuals to assist the COO in managing various areas, such as project management and facilities management. While this strategy will provide support to the COO, it remains to be seen whether the strategy will provide the necessary support during the transition. AOC has also established a transition team that is chaired by the Director of Congressional and External Relations and that includes the COO and the Chief Administrative Officer, among others. This team has begun to prepare background materials for quickly bringing the new Architect up to speed on the agency and its initiatives, once a new Architect has been selected. The team also plans to be involved in preparing potential candidates for the confirmation hearings by providing the candidates with information on AOC's responsibilities and structure, including its strategic plan.

AOC Revised Its Strategic Plan, but Has Not Clearly Delineated a Strategy for Best Delivering Its Services

Over the past year, AOC has revised its strategic plan to better focus on its mission and provide a means to demonstrate results. In January 2007, AOC issued the revised plan, which sets forth AOC's mission—to provide Congress and the public with a wide range of professional expertise and services to preserve and enhance the Capitol complex and related facilities. The revised plan also has three strategic goals—congressional and Supreme Court operations support, heritage asset stewardship, and leadership and administrative support—which cover all of AOC's operations. The plan includes performance measures that allow AOC to regularly monitor progress in achieving its strategic goals and convey the results of its activities in its annual performance and accountability report. AOC's revised strategic plan is an important building block in the agency's efforts to become more strategic and accountable and provides a framework for assessing and prioritizing the agency's activities.

While AOC has defined its mission and goals in its revised strategic plan, the agency has not identified how best to deliver the services—through

outsourcing or in-house resources—that support the mission and goals and has not determined whether its workforce has the skills and capacity to deliver those services. These two initiatives—identifying how best to deliver services and developing a workforce plan—are interrelated. For example, contracting out for a service requires a different set of skills to manage the contract than to conduct the work. While AOC has included both initiatives in its strategic plan and COO action plan¹⁵ and recognizes that coordinating these initiatives is important, the agency’s workforce planning efforts do not include an analysis of potential outsourcing opportunities that may arise as the result of AOC’s identification of how best to deliver services.

Service Delivery

Given recent trends and long-range fiscal challenges, we have reported the need for the federal government to engage in a fundamental review, reassessment, and reprioritization of what the government does, how the government does business, and who does the government’s business.¹⁶ In fiscal year 2005, AOC outsourced about 23 percent of the agency’s operations and maintenance expenditures; this percentage was within the range of operations outsourced by similar organizations (12 to 41 percent).¹⁷ However, AOC has not comprehensively reviewed all the services it provides to determine whether the services could better be provided through outsourcing or in-house resources. Consequently, few activities are outsourced consistently throughout AOC, and contracts are seldom consolidated to obtain similar services across jurisdictions.¹⁸ In 2006, the House Appropriations Committee instructed AOC to develop a plan that analyzes the costs, cost-effectiveness, benefits, and feasibility of the Architect’s entering into contracts with private entities for managing and operating its facilities.¹⁹ AOC submitted a plan to Congress that

¹⁵In August 2006, AOC also issued a COO action plan, which is a 1- to 2-year plan that sets forth “quick hit” tactical actions intended to help AOC become a more strategic and accountable organization. According to the plan, once these actions are completed, the action plan will no longer be necessary, since the strategic plan will serve as the vehicle for change and process improvement.

¹⁶GAO, *Commercial Activities Panel: Improving the Sourcing Decisions of the Federal Government*, [GAO-02-847T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2002).

¹⁷AOC also outsourced about 90 percent of capitalized expenditures for fiscal year 2005; however, AOC’s capitalized expenditures were not comparable with similar organizations.

¹⁸We provided this finding in our September 2006 briefing to the House Appropriations Committee on AOC’s outsourcing efforts.

¹⁹House Rep. No. 109-485, at 14 (2006).

outlines a long-term strategy for comprehensively reviewing operations and identifying opportunities for additional contracting; however, the plan does not provide time frames for executing this strategy. AOC officials told us that the time frames for the long-term strategy depend on coordination with the new congressional leadership to brief them on AOC's outsourcing plan.

In 2002, the Commercial Activities Panel issued guiding principles for federal agencies to follow when making decisions on whether to outsource services.²⁰ In briefings to congressional committees, we have reported that these principles could guide AOC in determining how best to deliver its services. For example, the panel recommended that the decision on whether to outsource services should

- support agency missions, goals, and objectives (as defined in the agency's strategic plan);
- be based on a clear, transparent, and consistently applied process;
- avoid arbitrary full-time equivalent or other arbitrary numerical goals;
- ensure that competitions involve a process that considers both quality and cost factors; and
- provide for accountability in connection with all decisions.

Workforce Planning

In addition, AOC has not assessed its current workforce to determine whether it has the appropriate balance of skills needed to provide services and manage contracts for services that are outsourced. An assessment of AOC's workforce can help AOC leadership further refine their decisions on whether to deliver AOC's services with outsourcing or in-house resources. As we recommended, AOC has taken steps to identify current and future workforce needs and address potential skill gaps by hiring a contractor to assist in the development of a strategic workforce plan. Although the scope of the contractor's work will include collecting and

²⁰Section 832 of the Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2001, Pub. L. No. 106-398, 114 Stat. 1654 (2000) required the Comptroller General of the United States to convene a panel of experts to study the process used by the federal government to make sourcing decisions. After a year-long study, this panel published its report in April 2002. See Commercial Activities Panel, *Improving the Sourcing Decisions of the Government: Final Report* (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 30, 2002), on the GAO Web site, <http://www.gao.gov>.

analyzing data on AOC's workforce, it does not include an analysis of potential outsourcing opportunities that may arise as the result of AOC's identification of how best to deliver services. Furthermore, the COO requested that the workforce planning efforts include an analysis of potential outsourcing opportunities, but the COO's guidance came after AOC had finalized its workforce planning contract. An AOC official responsible for the contract stated that this level of analysis either would require additional resources for the current contract or would need to be incorporated into a second phase of its workforce planning efforts. Another initiative in AOC's workforce planning efforts—the implementation of a skills assessment survey—has been delayed to revise the survey instrument and make a more useful tool for collecting data on AOC's current workforce. An official stated that AOC does not expect the skills assessment survey to be completed in the near future. Consequently, data from the skills assessment survey will not be taken into account in the work being done by AOC's contractor responsible for developing the strategic workforce plan.

Improved Communication Procedures Need to Be Sustained

AOC took several steps over the past year to improve communication with its external stakeholders, and stakeholders are responding positively to these efforts. To improve communication with congressional stakeholders, AOC hired a Director of Congressional and External Relations. The director is responsible for developing and maintaining positive relations with congressional stakeholders, and she regularly provides them with updates on AOC issues. Other AOC officials, including the COO and the Director of Planning and Project Management, also periodically brief congressional stakeholders on a variety of issues, such as revisions to the strategic plan, the COO's action plan, and AOC's budget submission and the status of projects. As a result of these efforts, the COO believes that AOC better understands what Congress wants and is able to set expectations, obtain feedback, and make changes on the basis of that feedback. Congressional stakeholders we spoke with generally agree that AOC's outreach efforts have improved, and they said that the addition of the Director of Congressional and External Relations has improved AOC's responsiveness to congressional questions and requests for information.

Although AOC has taken steps to improve communication with its congressional stakeholders, it is critical for these improvements to be formalized and sustained. AOC is finalizing written procedures for communicating with congressional and other external stakeholders and plans to brief congressional leadership on these procedures. In instituting these procedures, AOC is working to establish "one voice" for the agency

and set expectations for AOC's response time to stakeholder inquiries. Although congressional stakeholders generally agree that communication has improved, documentation of AOC's communication procedures can help ensure that AOC deals with its congressional customers using clearly defined, consistently applied, and transparent policies and procedures.²¹

AOC also has taken actions to improve communication with its employees, but the effectiveness of these efforts remains to be seen. AOC recently revised its process for collecting and assessing data on employee satisfaction to address our recommendations on systematically collecting and communicating employee feedback. AOC continues to distribute newsletters to its employees; hold biannual town hall meetings and monthly, small-group sessions with the COO; and address issues that were identified in employee focus groups, first held in 2004.²² AOC also contracted for an ombudsperson to serve as a confidential resource for responding to employee complaints, concerns, and questions on employment-related matters. Although these are positive steps, AOC will not be able to determine the extent to which communication has been improved until the next round of employee focus groups is completed and compared with the results of the 2004 focus groups. AOC originally planned to conduct the next round of focus groups in fiscal year 2007; however, because of fiscal constraints and ongoing transformation efforts, AOC is considering the possibility of conducting focus groups in fiscal year 2008.

The effectiveness of AOC's communication improvements also depends on how well AOC can identify and address issues that may arise as well as communicate the actions that are being taken to address the issues. For example, in 2006, employees involved in repairing AOC's utility tunnels expressed concerns over how AOC management communicated with them. Although AOC developed a plan to address problems in the utility tunnels, the tunnel workers expressed concern that they had no clear idea of when the problems would be solved. To improve communication, AOC began holding weekly meetings with the tunnel shop workers in April 2006 to discuss tunnel issues and the actions being taken, but workers continued to express frustration about the lack of progress in addressing

²¹GAO-03-231.

²²AOC established employee focus groups as a method for collecting employee feedback information on a regular basis.

their safety and health concerns.²³ As issues such as worker safety arise, it is important for employees to see that AOC's leadership not only listens to their concerns, but also takes action and makes appropriate adjustments in a visible and timely way.²⁴

Further Progress in Improving Financial Management, IT Management, and Project Management Requires Ongoing Commitment

AOC has made progress in financial management, IT management, and project management, but sustained commitment is required to continue progress on the long-term efforts in these areas, many of which are needed to improve AOC's internal controls and accountability. Internal control and accountability are critical elements in managing an organization. Internal control involves the plans, methods, and procedures used to meet missions, goals, and objectives and, in doing so, to support performance-based management. Accountability represents the processes, mechanisms, and other means by which AOC managers demonstrate their stewardship and responsibility for resources and performance. Internal control and accountability initiatives require sustained and committed leadership to ensure successful implementation. While AOC has made progress in all nine areas that are important to a strong strategic management and accountability framework, work remains to develop significant and lasting internal control and accountability improvements in the areas of financial management, IT management, and project management. (See app. I for more information on the status of recommendations in all nine areas, including strategic management, human capital management, facilities management, worker safety, CPP management, and recycling.)

Financial Management

AOC has made progress in preparing its financial statements and implementing a new financial management system, but significant work remains to establish an effective internal control framework and cost accounting system. AOC achieved its goal of preparing auditable comprehensive agencywide financial statements with the successful audit of its fiscal year 2005 and 2006 financial statements. To a significant extent, these achievements reflect the increased focus and attention by AOC's senior management on financial accountability and control. For example, AOC's senior management regularly meets with the AOC Audit Committee and its internal and external auditors to discuss the status of the financial statement audits, any related findings, and AOC's corrective plans. In 2006, AOC also implemented the final phase of its new financial

²³GAO-07-227R.

²⁴GAO-04-299 and GAO-04-966.

management system. AOC has begun efforts to establish a risk-based internal control framework, although progress has been impacted by staffing shortages and limited resources. To improve accountability across the agency, AOC has begun the implementation of its cost accounting system, including working to get employees to charge their time to specific activities and project codes in the time and attendance system and working to develop reporting formats that demonstrate the types of information that can be generated when the system is fully implemented. Although these are important steps, the system will have to be further developed to link AOC's cost information to the strategic plan, performance measures, and performance-based budgeting—actions that are important to producing reliable information for decision making and performance evaluation. AOC officials noted that further progress in implementing the internal control framework and the cost accounting system will be limited by current resource constraints. Implementing this key effort impacts other AOC initiatives. For example, while AOC has taken steps to improve its cost and timeliness measures for facilities management, it will not be able to accurately and routinely track or benchmark these measures until the cost accounting system is further developed and linked with the facilities management information system. AOC officials noted that it will take several years for the systems and processes to evolve to the point that the system can be fully implemented. Successful implementation of these systems and processes that impact all of AOC's operations will require sustained organizational commitment to ensure these efforts are appropriately funded, staffed, and monitored. Until these efforts are implemented and operating effectively, AOC continues to face substantial risk in the area of linking cost and financial information to organizational performance.

IT Management

AOC has made progress in improving IT management controls and accountability, but work remains to fully implement an effective agencywide approach to IT management. To improve management controls in AOC's IT investment management process, AOC developed and approved an IT investment management policy that describes the agency's investment management process and the roles and authorities of the boards involved in overseeing IT investments. AOC also has begun to plan for and implement the practices in our IT investment management guide associated with corporate, portfolio-based investment decision making. However, AOC has yet to prioritize all IT investments, develop an IT investment portfolio, and oversee each investment from a portfolio approach to ensure that it achieves its cost, benefit, schedule, and risk expectations. According to AOC officials, AOC has begun the process of establishing an IT portfolio management program that will arrange IT

investment into a single portfolio and provide visibility, control, and decisions based on project objectives such as costs, resources, and risks. However, until AOC fully institutes these practices, it cannot ensure that the investments address the agency's strategic goals, objectives, and mission.

Project Management

AOC also took actions to improve internal controls and accountability in the area of project management, but sustained commitment is needed to continue progress in managing project costs and developing a project information system to help manage and track projects. For example, AOC made internal control and accountability improvements by developing and tracking project-management-related performance measures, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of staff in the Project Management Division, and revising its project management manuals. However, AOC's lack of accurate cost data for the Construction Division—the division that provides construction services in-house (rather than by contractors)—hampers its efforts to fully account for the costs of projects. In April 2006, a peer review group within AOC issued recommendations designed to better track cost data for the division, including standardizing the cost estimating process. AOC is taking steps to address the peer review recommendations, such as developing centralized planning and estimating capabilities to provide better cost estimates for all Construction Division projects, but, according to AOC officials, the agency will not be able to fully account for project costs until the cost accounting system is in place. In addition, AOC plans to modify its project information system to improve AOC's ability to manage, track, and communicate the status of projects. AOC has developed the requirements for this system, which includes the automation of AOC's quarterly construction projects progress report. AOC plans to begin modifications to the current system with available in-house resources in fiscal year 2007 and requested funding for further modifications in its fiscal year 2008 budget. Sustained support of these project management initiatives is critical to improving AOC's efforts to manage projects, identify reasons for project cost and schedule changes, and report to the stakeholders.

On the basis of our ongoing work and issued testimonies on AOC's management of the CVC project, we and AOC worked together to identify lessons learned from the ongoing CVC project, some of which are also relevant for project management across AOC. For example, one lesson suggests the importance of establishing and maintaining a detailed, realistic, and complete project schedule and ensuring that the schedule sufficiently reflects the impact of problems and changes and the likely impact of known risks. Another lesson suggests the importance of clearly

identifying qualifications and limitations associated with cost and schedule estimates; understanding risks and uncertainties; and providing Congress with accurate, timely updates on the project's status, completion date, and costs. Recognizing the need to improve how AOC manages large projects, the agency is adding capital project administrators to its Project Management Division to lead the design and construction activities of larger projects.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In responding to a draft of this report, AOC generally agreed with our assessment of the agency's overall progress, but noted that 2 additional recommendations—1 on institutionalizing financial management practices to support budgeting, financial, and program management and 1 on developing a rigorous approach for collecting worker safety data—should be considered implemented. According to AOC officials, the agency has made significant progress over the past year and installed a solid foundation for further improvements. The officials also recognized that continued focused attention to the agency's improvement initiatives is essential to maintaining progress. For our recommendation on financial management practices, AOC suggested that the two remaining actions for this recommendation—fully developing and implementing an appropriate risk-based internal control framework and cost accounting and management reporting initiatives—are addressed in the other financial management recommendations. In our August 2004 report, we noted the AOC's limited progress on the financial management initiatives, which lead us to make additional recommendations calling for senior management to provide strong and visible support and commitment to helping ensure that these important initiatives are successfully implemented. While some progress has been made on these initiatives, AOC officials noted that further progress will be limited by staffing shortages and resource constraints. The potential limited, near-term progress leads us to observe in this report that successful implementation of these systems and processes, which impact all of AOC's operations, will require sustained organizational commitment to ensure these efforts are appropriately funded, staffed, and monitored. We maintain that full implementation of these initiatives is necessary for institutionalizing internal control and accountability and strengthening and supporting effective budgeting, financial, and performance management at AOC. For the recommendation on collecting worker safety data, AOC officials noted that they believe their current practices—including conducting biennial focus groups, conducting daily shop safety meetings, and establishing a safety hazards hotline—sufficiently meet the requirements of this recommendation. While we recognize that these initiatives provide the agency with some

information on worker safety, these initiatives do not provide a rigorous and confidential approach for collecting employee perceptions of AOC's safety climate, such as perceptions of management commitment, discipline policies, and hazard corrections. This lack of confidentiality can impede the quality of information collected. Furthermore, although AOC established a schedule to collect employee feedback every other year, AOC has not conducted focus groups since fiscal year 2004 and does not have plans to do so until possibly fiscal year 2008. AOC's recently revised employee feedback manual specifies that AOC can use other means or tools to collect and provide employee feedback information. This would allow AOC to pursue another, more rigorous and confidential method for collecting worker safety data. AOC also made clarifying and technical comments that we addressed in the text of this report.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees. We are also sending this report to the Acting Architect of the Capitol. We will make copies available to others upon request. In addition, this report will be available at no cost on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report.

If you or your staffs have any questions about this report, you may contact me at (202) 512-6923 or at dorn@gao.gov. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix II.



Terrell G. Dorn
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

Since January 2003, we have made 64 recommendations in nine areas to improve the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) strategic management and accountability framework, which is needed to drive the agency's transformation effort and address long-standing program issues. These nine areas are strategic management, human capital management, financial management, information technology (IT) management, project management, facilities management, worker safety, Capitol Power Plant (CPP) management,¹ and recycling. Over the past year, AOC has implemented 21 recommendations, bringing the total number of implemented or closed recommendations to 43 out of 64, or 67 percent.

This appendix provides (1) the overall progress and remaining actions in each of the nine issue areas and (2) details on the status of the recommendations made in each area (see tables 1 through 9). For the recommendations that have been implemented, the "status" column in the tables includes the month and year of the GAO report that acknowledges the completion of that recommendation. Recommendations implemented since our February 2006 report were given an implementation date of February 2007.

Strategic Management

AOC has made progress in improving its strategic planning and organizational alignment, establishing meaningful performance measures, improving the process to obtain feedback from employees and customers, and strengthening the relationship between AOC and congressional stakeholders. As a result, AOC has implemented 6 of our strategic management recommendations over the year. Specifically, AOC has issued its revised strategic plan and the Chief Operating Officer (COO) action plan and provided periodic briefings to update congressional stakeholders on these plans and related organizational changes. To improve communication with its employees, AOC revised its employee feedback process manual to establish a process for regularly collecting and reporting employee feedback information. Finally, to improve communication with its external stakeholders, AOC is establishing procedures for communicating with congressional and other external

¹During this same time period, GAO made an additional 8 recommendations related to the Capitol power plant master plan. See GAO, *Capitol Power Plant Utility Master Plan*, [GAO-04-456RNI](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2004). AOC implemented 6 of the recommendations and is making progress in implementing the remaining 2 recommendations. Due to the security sensitive nature of these recommendations, we did not include these recommendations in this report.

stakeholders and has taken a more proactive approach to communicating with these stakeholders.

Although AOC has made progress in the area of strategic management, sustained commitment from the agency's new leaders is necessary to build upon this progress. To ensure that the strategic plan is current and useful to the agency, AOC leadership should review and update the strategic plan regularly and incorporate any changes that may result from AOC's review of options and strategies for delivering its services and operations. Furthermore, AOC should continue to work with congressional stakeholders to develop and report key measures that are meaningful to AOC's customers and reflect the agency's day-to-day operations. See table 1 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on strategic management.

Table 1: Current Status of Recommendations on Strategic Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. Improve strategic planning and organizational alignment by involving key congressional and other external stakeholders in AOC's strategic planning efforts and in any organizational changes that may result from these efforts.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled our recommendation by involving congressional and other stakeholders in drafting the January 2007 version of the strategic plan. For example, AOC conducted briefings with stakeholders on the strategic plan and COO action plan, sought feedback, and integrated the suggested changes into the plans. In addition, AOC has hired a permanent COO and a Director of Congressional and External Relations to coordinate the flow of information between Congress and the Architect of the Capitol (Architect) and the COO.</p>
<p>2. To strengthen the relationship between AOC and its congressional and other stakeholders, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO to actively consult with Congress on the design and implementation of meaningful outcome-based and performance-based measures that are useful to both AOC and Congress. This effort will enable AOC and Congress to assess AOC's progress.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has developed a mixture of outcome and output measures that are clearly linked to its strategic goals, and AOC has worked with congressional stakeholders to develop, review, and revise three documents designed to assist AOC in becoming a more strategic and accountable organization. All three documents track performance toward specific targets that are linked to the agency's strategic goals.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>3. Develop a comprehensive strategy to improve internal and external communications by providing opportunities for routine employee input and feedback.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic plan contains AOC's three strategic goals and a performance plan that outlines specific objectives and associated activities as well as performance measures that are linked to the strategic goals. This plan is used by the COO and the Architect to move AOC forward and track progress on AOC's strategic goals. • The COO action plan is for use by the COO and the Architect in tracking progress on a set of complimentary tasks to AOC's strategic plan. The action plan contains several short-term "quick hit" items intended to help AOC become a more strategic and accountable organization. • The AOC dashboard summarizes AOC's performance and contains a series of tactical or operational indicators that are tracked on a monthly basis and are for use by the COO and the Architect, as well as superintendents and division heads, to discuss AOC's performance. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressional stakeholders noted that they would like to see key measures that are meaningful to AOC's customers and reflect the agency's day-to-day operations. For example, response time on cleaning requests (such as a request to clean up a spill in a hallway) is important to AOC's building occupants, but AOC does not have a measure that captures how quickly the agency responds to this type of request. Stakeholders also suggested that AOC could develop a top 10 key indicators list that succinctly shows AOC's overall performance. <p>AOC has established a process for obtaining employee input and feedback and finalized a process manual for employee feedback. The process manual provides guidance for obtaining employee feedback using a four-step approach: identifying concerns, obtaining data, giving feedback, and following up on results. The process manual also details responsibilities for staff and provides an implementation plan. While AOC has provided opportunities for routine employee feedback, it is important for AOC to collect a consistent and comprehensive set of data on a regular basis in order to monitor progress against an established baseline.</p>
<p>4. Gather and analyze employee feedback from focus groups or surveys before fiscal year 2005, as well as communicate how it is taking actions to address any identified employee concerns.</p> <p>January 2004</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC held focus group sessions in September 2004 and has communicated planned actions to employees by issuing three brochures. According to AOC, it has begun to implement several of the planned actions and will continue to communicate with employees as each action plan is implemented. In addition, AOC has issued a focus group guide that outlines procedures for conducting focus groups and reporting on the results.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>5. To improve communication with employees, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO to fully and effectively implement the basic framework as defined in its communications plan and process manuals, and finalize its draft employee feedback manual to ensure that the current progress already made is maintained.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC implemented the basic framework in its communications plan through a variety of communication methods to convey information to employees, including a weekly newsletter on project updates, policy announcements, management and communication tips, and other agencywide messages. AOC has also distributed a process manual for employee feedback.</p>
<p>6. Develop a comprehensive strategy to improve internal and external communications by completing the development of congressional protocols by involving stakeholders.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC is finalizing its congressional protocols, designed to facilitate and improve internal and external communications. AOC has worked closely with its congressional stakeholders to develop these protocols to ensure that they are useful to AOC, Congress, and other external stakeholders. The Director of Congressional and External Relations has sought and incorporated input from both internal and external stakeholders during the development of these protocols.</p>
<p>7. Conduct a pilot of its congressional protocols in one or more of its jurisdictions to determine how well its protocols would work in addressing customer requests for service, while balancing the need of multiple requests with the strategic plan and corresponding project priorities of the agency.</p> <p>January 2004</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has chosen to pilot its congressional protocols agencywide to avoid potential confusion among jurisdictions operating under different protocols and to take advantage of the benefits of training all employees concurrently. AOC officials stated that AOC expects to receive feedback from its stakeholders during the protocol's implementation and will revise the protocols, as appropriate.</p>
<p>8. Develop a comprehensive strategy to improve internal and external communications by improving annual accountability reporting through annual performance planning and reporting.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC fulfilled our recommendation through the release of its fiscal year 2003 accountability report and plans to publish annual accountability reports thereafter. In addition, AOC released a performance plan in April 2005 that details steps to achieve its strategic goals and objectives. AOC staff, AOC Audit Committee staff, GAO, and other congressional stakeholders are involved in the development of these reports. AOC plans to monitor the progress toward meeting milestones outlined in its performance plan through monthly assessment meetings.</p>
<p>9. Develop a comprehensive strategy to improve internal and external communications by continuing to regularly measure customer satisfaction AOC-wide.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (January 2004)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled our recommendation by implementing the annual building services customer satisfaction survey. Information from the survey will be incorporated into AOC's business plan and will be useful in monitoring the quality of AOC's services and the progress of AOC's improvement initiatives.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>10. To strengthen the relationship between AOC and its congressional and other stakeholders, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO to expedite the release of the 2003 building services customer satisfaction survey, as a transparency and accountability mechanism, and to provide Congress and other stakeholders with assurance that actions are being taken in response to their feedback.</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled our recommendation by releasing the results of the 2003 building services customer satisfaction survey in its 2004 report. The report tracked customer satisfaction between 2002 and 2004. In addition, AOC provided customers with letters detailing actions planned to address their concerns.</p>
<p>August 2004</p>		
<p>11. Establish action-oriented implementation goals over the long term and a timeline with milestone dates to track the organization's progress toward achieving those implementation goals. The Architect of the Capitol should work with key congressional and other stakeholders to develop plans.</p>	<p>Implemented (January 2004)</p>	<p>AOC fulfilled our recommendation by issuing its draft performance plan in March 2003, which was prepared to satisfy a congressional requirement for the development of a management improvement plan. This draft performance plan for fiscal years 2003-2007 established action-oriented implementation goals over the long term and a timeline with milestone dates to track the organization's progress toward achieving those goals.</p>
<p>January 2003</p>		
<p>12. To enhance the usefulness of the COO action plan, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol and the COO consult with Members of Congress and key committees on the specific information regarding AOC's plans, policies, procedures, actions, and proposed organizational changes. As part of this effort, the Architect of the Capitol and the COO should work with Congress to determine Congress's information needs and the timing and format of delivery of that information that will best meet Congress's needs. Furthermore, consistent with our findings and recommendations with respect to congressional and other stakeholder involvement in general and the Capitol complex master plan in particular, as well as our original January 2003 management review, specific emphasis should be placed on AOC's project management. Particular issues to be discussed could include how</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC fulfilled this recommendation by taking several actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2006, AOC hired a permanent COO. • In August 2006, the COO issued an action plan, including actions related to project management. For example, the action plan includes establishing technical expertise in project scheduling to improve AOC's estimating process and enhancing project delivery services through continued use of an effective project process and monitoring of all projects to ensure completion of projects on time and within budget. • To ensure project priorities are determined, AOC continues to meet with congressional stakeholders to discuss how AOC targets its resources and prioritizes projects and revised its project prioritization process to more clearly articulate the criteria for assigning project ratings. • To monitor projects, AOC continues to issue quarterly reports to Congress on the cost and schedule of active projects. • To benefit from lessons learned, AOC developed and implemented design services and construction services surveys. Also, AOC developed and implemented an acquisition strategy process with an acquisition strategy board that meets on a regular basis to discuss, among other things, lessons learned from previous projects. AOC's acquisition strategy board also discusses the best mix of in-house and contractor support as part of their regular meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC's projects' priorities are determined; • AOC monitors and controls project cost, quality, and timeliness; • AOC uses lessons learned from projects and seeks to incorporate best practices; • project management accountability is assigned and managed; and 		

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC determines the best mix of in-house and contractor support when designing projects. <p>Subsequent COO action plans and status reports will likely be most helpful to Congress to the extent that they are rigorously specific as to the problem or issue that needs to be addressed, the actions that are being taken in response, the progress to date, and milestones for additional actions.</p> <p>August 2004</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve accountability, AOC established a project management organization with a project manager dedicated to each project from start to finish. Also, AOC uses its dashboard (see table 2, recommendation 1) to monitor project management performance and discuss performance issues with AOC senior management each month. AOC officials, including the COO and the Director of Planning and Project Management, also regularly brief congressional stakeholders on a variety of issues, including AOC's budget submission, status of projects, and project priorities.
<p>13. AOC should further refine its employee feedback efforts by establishing a method(s) to collect consistent and comprehensive information on a regular basis and to allow AOC to track results over time against an established baseline.</p> <p>October 2005</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has recently revised its employee feedback process manual, which establishes a process for regularly collecting employee feedback information. In the revised employee feedback manual, AOC established the results of its 2004 focus groups as a baseline for its work environment assessment and planned to conduct focus groups every 2 years. AOC originally planned to conduct the next round of focus groups in fiscal year 2007; however, because of the fiscal constraints and ongoing transformation efforts, AOC may conduct focus groups in fiscal year 2008, according to AOC officials. AOC also plans to conduct other feedback efforts, such as surveys of customer satisfaction, as needed.</p>
<p>14. AOC should improve its communications strategy for employee feedback (as documented in its employee feedback manual) to ensure that employees and external stakeholders receive an adequate level of detail about employee feedback initiative results and related agency actions in a timely manner. The communications strategy also should emphasize the need to summarize the documents and provide a consistent level of detail.</p> <p>October 2005</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has improved its communication strategy for employee feedback by revising its employee feedback process manual to reflect GAO's recommendations on the timeliness of feedback to employees and is completing final edits on the manual. For the next biennial assessment, AOC plans to make one person responsible for preparing initial feedback to employees as soon as practicable and for developing a feedback plan that provides information to stakeholders within 4 months of completing the assessment. AOC's revised employee feedback manual also states that the level of detail on feedback should be tailored for each audience and purpose. Although AOC has set up a process to fulfill this recommendation, AOC needs to demonstrate that it has improved its communication strategy in its next series of focus groups by providing employees and stakeholders with timely information on focus group results and initiatives.</p>

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Human Capital Management

AOC has taken steps to strengthen performance management and strategic human capital management by implementing our recommendation to develop the capacity for collecting and analyzing workforce data. Additionally, AOC has hired a contractor to begin developing a strategic workforce plan intended to provide AOC with information on its current and future workforce as well as recommendations on how AOC could meet its strategic goals. Although hiring the contractor is an important step, AOC's current effort to develop a strategic workforce plan will not include an assessment of how best to deliver (either through outsourcing or in-house resources) the services it provides. Without this type of assessment, AOC's strategic workforce plan will not provide AOC leadership with the appropriate set of strategies to acquire, develop, and retain its current and future workforce. See table 2 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on human capital management.

Table 2: Current Status of Recommendations on Human Capital Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
1. Strengthen performance measurement and strategic human capital management by developing annual goals and measuring performance. January 2003	Implemented (February 2006)	AOC has implemented a performance management approach that includes strategic planning, annual performance planning and reporting, and assessment of AOC's progress in meeting agencywide milestones and measures. AOC has identified four strategic goals: facilities management, project management, human capital management, and organizational excellence. AOC also has identified a number of measures to monitor and evaluate performance, and these measures will serve as the basis for employees' annual performance goals as well as the assessment of AOC's overall success in meeting its strategic goals. The measures include quality facility management; projects delivered on time, on budget, and of high quality; highly skilled and motivated employees; and effects of managerial oversight. In addition, AOC has developed a document—the AOC dashboard—that summarizes performance in each of its strategic focus areas: project management, facilities management, human capital management, and organizational excellence. The dashboard includes several high-level indicators to track performance for each of the strategic goals as well as a target goal for each indicator.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>2. Strengthen performance measurement and strategic human capital management by creating "a line of sight" by linking AOC's senior executive and employee performance management systems to mission-critical goals.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC's senior executive performance management system and its employee performance evaluation system are linked to AOC's mission-critical goals. Employees are expected to ensure completion of a performance plan that outlines performance standards for each critical task related to the employee's position. The employee's performance is evaluated against the established performance plan as it relates to AOC's strategic goals and objectives. The employee is given a rating of "outstanding," "fully successful," or "unsuccessful" for each element as well as a summary rating.</p>
<p>3. Strengthen performance measurement and strategic human capital management by establishing agencywide core and technical competencies and holding employees accountable for these competencies as a part of the performance management system.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC previously identified core competencies for most of the agency's positions and has linked these competencies to the positions' critical tasks. <p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC is working with a contractor to develop a process to link identified core competencies to an individual's training plan and performance assessment. AOC has not set a specific completion date for this phase. Employees still need to be notified of the competencies that they will be evaluated against. AOC is currently working to develop a communications plan for this notification.
<p>4. Strengthen performance measurement and strategic human capital management by developing the capacity to collect and analyze workforce data.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC's Workforce Planning and Management Office has identified numerous ways to collect, report, and analyze workforce data. Additionally, several data sources have been identified for analyzing the agency's workforce and developing products such as AOC's retirement report. AOC also has developed a system to report and monitor full-time equivalents (FTE) on a regular basis using man-hours required for projects rather than estimating FTEs on the basis of funding.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>5. Strengthen performance measurement and strategic human capital management by identifying current and future workforce needs and developing strategies to fill gaps.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has awarded a contract for the development of a strategic workforce plan, which AOC expects will identify and detail the (1) goals of the agency for the next 5 years, (2) areas where progress has previously been made, and (3) current and future changes that should be made to preclude gaps in staffing. The final plan was to be delivered in March 2007, but because of the increase in AOC's workload resulting from office moves for the new Congress, the contractor was unable to hold focus groups as planned. AOC now anticipates receiving the completed plan in May 2007. To assess and analyze current skill sets, AOC has developed a skills assessment survey and a draft communications plan for rolling out the survey. This survey, which will identify, measure, and track employee skills agencywide, was tested in a focus group as it was developed, and AOC has consulted the unions and jurisdictions about implementing the skills assessment survey and a strategy for the data collection. However, these consultations have been suspended because of the recent congressional election and related office moves as well as because of needed revisions to the survey instrument. <p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC needs to assess how best to deliver its services—through outsourcing or in-house resources—that support AOC's mission and goals. This assessment is an important input into the development of a strategic workforce plan, which focuses on developing strategies to acquire, develop, and retain an organization's total workforce (including full- and part-time in-house staff and contractors) to meet future workforce needs. AOC's contractor needs to complete work relating to a strategic workforce plan, including conducting focus groups with managers to ascertain the future direction of the agency.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>6. Strengthen AOC's human capital policies, procedures, and processes by continuing to develop and implement agencywide human capital policies and procedures and by holding management and employees accountable for following these policies and procedures.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to complete the skills assessment survey. AOC plans to continue working with the contractor responsible for developing the survey to revise the survey instrument to produce the desired data. Once the revisions are completed and the survey has been approved by the union and AOC managers, AOC employees will complete the survey online. The results of the survey should be used as input into the strategic workforce planning process to identify the skill gaps of AOC's current workforce and develop strategies to fill AOC's future workforce needs. • To strengthen its organizational capacity and to leverage information collected in its Retirement Forecasting (2005-2009) Report, AOC should begin developing a succession plan for its workforce. We have previously reported that leading organizations use succession planning efforts that (1) receive the active support of top leadership; (2) link to the agencies' strategic planning; (3) identify talent from staff at multiple organizational levels, early in their careers, or identify staff with critical skills; (4) emphasize developmental assignments in addition to formal training; and (5) address specific human capital challenges, such as diversity. <p>AOC has approved a policy development schedule to revise human capital policies as part of its human capital plan. In addition, AOC developed a document for supervisors, <i>Supervisors' Tools of the Trade</i>, which provides supplemental guidance on human capital policies as needed. Supervisors are rated for performance in human capital management as part of AOC's evaluation system. However, it is important that AOC continue to monitor whether supervisors and managers are fairly administering the policies as the revisions are implemented.</p>
<p>7. Strengthen AOC's human capital policies, procedures, and processes by assessing ways in which AOC management could better gather and analyze data from the various employee relations offices and the employee advisory council while maintaining employee confidentiality.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled this recommendation by holding monthly meetings between the Human Resources Director, the Equal Employment Opportunity and Conciliation Program Director, the chair of the employee advisory council, the employment council, the employee assistance program manager, and the Deputy Chief of Staff to review and discuss employee relations data. The group makes recommendations to senior management on the basis of findings and takes action on the items. According to AOC, the importance of maintaining employee confidentiality is emphasized at each meeting.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>8. To improve communications with employees, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO to conduct an analysis of both AOC management and employee needs with respect to resolving employee concerns and issues as well as assessing the capacity of existing offices to fulfill those needs.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Closed – not implemented</p>	<p>Although AOC has not completed an assessment of the capacity of existing offices to resolve employee concerns and issues and does not plan to do so, the agency has implemented a variety of mechanisms to resolve employee concerns and issues. According to AOC, multiple offices and programs address employee concerns and issues, including the Equal Employment Office, the Employee Assistance Programs, the standard grievance process, and the external Office of Compliance process. In addition, AOC holds monthly meetings between representatives of these offices to review and discuss employee relations data. The group makes recommendations to senior management on the basis of findings and takes action on the items. Employees in bargaining units are also represented by the union and have a process in place to resolve individual employee issues. In October 2005, AOC issued a brochure to all employees on all Equal Employment Office policies and the available programs. In addition, AOC is currently developing a proposal that would establish a mediation program as part of AOC's operational business strategy. After implementing the pilot program, AOC plans to assess its use and effectiveness and make any needed modifications before making it a permanent program and expanding the group of trained mediators. AOC should continue to monitor the effectiveness of the programs through employee feedback.</p>
<p>9. Establish a direct reporting relationship between the ombudsperson and the Architect of the Capitol consistent with professional standards.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>According to AOC, a direct reporting relationship has been established between the ombudsperson and the Architect. Officials noted that the ombudsperson has the ability to speak directly with the Architect at any time about any issue that the ombudsperson feels necessary to bring to the Architect's attention.</p>

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Financial Management

Since our initial follow-up effort in January 2004, AOC has made progress—to varying degrees—on key control and accountability initiatives. AOC has developed agencywide audited financial statements, implemented a new financial management system, and continued to develop and implement a risk-based internal control framework and a cost accounting system that, when fully implemented, should generate meaningful cost and performance reporting information for managers. However, AOC's senior management needs to continue supporting the full implementation of key financial management and accountability efforts that are critical to AOC's operations. Although AOC senior management has helped to strengthen AOC's financial accountability by regularly monitoring and overseeing AOC's efforts to prepare agencywide comprehensive financial statements and have them audited, it needs to increase focus and attention on completing the development and implementation of the other three key financial management improvement initiatives—an internal control framework, a cost accounting system, and a management reporting system. According to AOC officials, current staffing shortages and funding constraints will likely limit meaningful near-term progress on these efforts. To continue AOC's progress, it will be essential for AOC's senior management to provide the commitment, attention, and resources needed to ensure the successful implementation of these important control and accountability initiatives. See table 3 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on financial management.

Table 3: Current Status of Recommendations on Financial Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. Continue to improve AOC's approach to financial management by developing strategies to institutionalize financial management practices that will support budgeting, financial, and program management at AOC. Such strategies could include developing performance goals and measures and associated roles aimed at increasing the accountability of nonfinancial managers and staff, such as jurisdictional superintendents, program managers, and other AOC staff—whose support is critical to the success of AOC's financial management initiatives—and ensuring that these staff received the training needed to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	Making progress	<p>Progress</p> <p>AOC has reported continued progress on key financial management initiatives intended to improve budgeting, financial management, and accountability agencywide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to AOC, it follows established governmentwide policies and procedures (OMB Circular A-11) for formulating and executing its budgets, but has not formally documented AOC-specific budget policies and procedures. • AOC officials reported that with the exception of two policies that are being drafted or revised, all accounting and financial reporting policies, procedures, and operating practices have been documented and implemented. • According to AOC, in January 2006, it completed the final phase of its multiyear implementation of a financial management system with the implementation of its inventory module. AOC reported that the financial management system as implemented satisfies all of the agency's functional system requirements. • AOC has achieved its goal of preparing auditable comprehensive agencywide financial statements with the successful audit of its fiscal years 2005 and 2006 financial statements, which received unqualified opinions on all statements audited. • AOC has initiated a multiphase approach for documenting and implementing a risk-based internal control framework. The approach calls for documenting relevant processes and policies; identifying, analyzing, and implementing needed controls; and monitoring the effectiveness of the controls. Initially, AOC is applying its approach to its three highest-risk areas—procurement (from purchase authorization through payment), payroll, and project management. AOC reported substantially completing the documentation of relevant processes and policies and identification and analysis of needed internal controls for both the procurement and the payroll areas, continuing to develop documentation of the current project management processes, and substantially implementing needed internal controls for the procurement area. AOC reported that it has begun manually monitoring implemented controls and hopes to implement an automated tool to monitor the effectiveness of its internal controls in the near future.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC reported making progress on its cost accounting/Management Operations Reporting (MOR) initiative by initiating its cost accounting system. Under this system, employees charge their payroll time to specific activities and project codes in the time and attendance system. AOC also reported rolling out an interim cost reporting structure to all jurisdictions and working with operating units to demonstrate the types of cost, finance, and performance-reporting information that can be generated when the cost accounting system is fully implemented. To make progress on these important initiatives, AOC has relied heavily on support contractors. According to AOC officials, further progress on these important efforts is likely to be limited by staffing shortages and funding constraints. <p>Remaining actions</p> <p>While AOC has made considerable progress on key financial management initiatives since we made our recommendation in 2003, additional actions are needed to fully implement two important remaining initiatives—its risk-based internal control framework and its cost accounting/MOR initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC needs to complete the documentation, analysis, implementation, and monitoring of internal controls associated with project management, payroll, and procurement high risk areas. In addition, AOC needs to identify all other areas of its operations where internal controls need to be documented, analyzed, implemented, and monitored. AOC needs to continue its development and implementation of its cost accounting/MOR initiative by ensuring that all applicable employees are coding their time charges; by developing mechanisms for rationally assigning applicable indirect costs—those not directly tied to specific project codes; and by working to refine and improve the usefulness of the cost, finance, and performance information available to managers. <p>Adequate resources in the form of AOC staff or contractor support and sustained leadership and management attention and support are needed to help ensure progress in institutionalizing these important financial management improvement initiatives.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>2. To help strengthen and sustain AOC's emerging foundation of financial accountability and control, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol, the COO, the Chief Financial Officer, and other senior management provide strong and visible support for efforts to prepare auditable financial statements and implement an effective internal control framework by monitoring the implementation and related milestones for each effort, ensuring the commitment to and support for each effort by participating AOC units, and acting to resolve any impediments that may arise.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <p>AOC senior management reported supporting the development of annual AOC-wide financial statements and an effective internal control framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to AOC, senior management and the Audit Committee, which senior management established, have provided regular monitoring and oversight of AOC's efforts to prepare agencywide comprehensive financial statements and have them independently audited. • While these audits have resulted in unqualified opinions on the statements, they also have continued to note material internal control weaknesses that adversely limit AOC's ability to establish a foundation for financial accountability and control. • Because AOC lacks in-house expertise, AOC senior management approved a permanent staff position and funding for contractor support needed to develop and implement an effective internal control framework. AOC is implementing this framework through a multiphased approach that documents processes and policies, identifies and implements needed controls, and establishes mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of internal controls for its three highest-risk areas—procurement (from purchase authorization through payment), payroll, and project management. In implementing the framework, AOC officials applied available resources to these highest-risk areas. • AOC officials, however, noted that staffing shortages and limited resources have hampered progress in implementing internal controls for the three highest-risk areas. For example, AOC officials reported that they had difficulty finding qualified candidates for the permanent staff position approved by senior management to manage the development of the internal control framework and the contractor support provided for developing and implementing the internal control framework will be affected in fiscal year 2007 by current constraints on AOC's annual appropriations. • Senior management support for the internal control framework also included periodic presentations and discussions on ongoing implementation efforts at bimonthly meetings of AOC's Management Council. AOC also reported developing a high-level executive briefing on the internal control framework and training for those with a role or responsibility in designing or operating the controls within the three highest-risk areas.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>3. To enhance the successful development of useful financial, cost, and performance reporting for major operating units and appropriate cost accounting, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO and the Chief Financial Officer to work with operating managers to assess the usefulness of financial-statement-level information, take an active role in AOC near-term efforts to develop agencywide performance measures, and review all available options to determine whether substantial work can begin, prior to fiscal year 2006, on the analyses needed to identify changes necessary to implement useful cost accounting at AOC.</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To expedite the implementation of an effective internal control framework, which represents an important accountability initiative, AOC senior management needs to enhance its management, monitoring, and oversight of AOC's current efforts to analyze, implement, and monitor needed internal controls in AOC's three highest-risk areas. As part of this initiative, AOC senior management needs to monitor and oversee efforts to develop and implement actions needed to resolve various material weaknesses identified as part of AOC's annual financial statement audit. AOC officials noted that they are developing a team of top executives and managers to act as a steering committee over internal control issues, but no date has been set for establishing the committee. Through such a committee, AOC senior management could regularly assess the progress on internal control-related efforts and identify and address impediments to planned progress (including those associated with limited staffing and resources). Once the framework for the three highest-risk areas is fully implemented, AOC management needs to assess the rest of AOC's operations to determine the extent to which other areas need to be included in the risk-based internal control framework. <p>AOC reported that it has made considerable progress since last year on efforts to develop useful cost, financial, and performance information; develop agencywide performance measures; and start implementing its cost accounting system. AOC reported that the Architect and the COO have taken an active role in developing of the revised strategic plan and related agencywide performance measures and in supporting the cost accounting/MOR initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of its efforts to implement its cost accounting/MOR initiative, AOC determined that financial-statement level information was of limited use to jurisdictional managers. As a result, AOC management focused its attention on how it could provide useful cost, financial, and performance information to its operational managers. In so doing, AOC reported that it developed potential formats for MOR information that demonstrates to operating unit managers the types of cost, financial, and performance information that can be generated when the cost accounting system is fully implemented. AOC also reported that it now generates biweekly cost accounting/MOR reports for each jurisdiction and division. AOC reported that it recently completed the development of a results-based strategic plan that includes comprehensive agencywide outcome (performance) measures. This effort started with the Architect and the COO revising AOC's Strategic Goals, which were then used to develop the revised strategic plan. The Architect and the COO monitored the plan's development and actively participated in the plan's review and finalization.

August 2004

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>4. To enhance the successful development of useful financial, cost, and performance reporting for major operating units and appropriate cost accounting, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO and the Chief Financial Officer to have senior management visibly demonstrate its continuing commitment to and support for making AOC-wide system, procedural, and cultural changes necessary to provide managers with timely financial, cost, and performance information by monitoring the efforts' implementation and related milestones, ensuring the commitment to and support for the efforts by participating AOC units, and acting to resolve any impediments that may arise.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC reported that during fiscal year 2006, it completed a pilot test of its cost accounting system and began implementing the system, including gathering cost data. In addition, AOC has begun recording salary-related cost information in its cost accounting system by working with all employees to charge their payroll time to specific activity and project codes in the time and attendance system. <p>The collective actions taken on this recommendation are sufficient to close out this recommendation.</p> <p>Remaining action</p> <p>Implementing effective cost accounting and reporting systems—ones that provide operating managers with useful cost, financial, and performance information—will require continuing leadership attention from AOC senior management to help ensure that needed system, procedural, and cultural changes occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To do so successfully, the COO, the Chief Financial Officer, and other AOC senior managers need to continue demonstrating their commitment and support for making the needed changes by working to ensure that these initiatives have sufficient staff and resources, by regularly monitoring progress against established milestones, and by working with senior managers AOC-wide to identify and resolve impediments to successful implementation. For example, AOC's senior management may wish to apply its leadership and attention by establishing a senior management level steering committee, similar to the one planned to monitor and oversee internal control issues, to help ensure that the cost accounting and management reporting initiatives are effectively implemented. Such a committee could regularly review the initiative's progress and work with AOC senior managers to resolve impediments as they arise.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Information Technology Management

AOC continues to make progress toward adopting an agencywide approach to information management and has implemented 2 IT recommendations over the year. Specifically, AOC has developed, approved, and implemented a process, including those practices in our IT investment management guide, for controlling existing projects. AOC also has established the management structure for developing, implementing, and maintaining an enterprise architecture (EA) and has made significant progress toward planning for and implementing the practices in our architecture management guide. These practices include ensuring that adequate resources (i.e., funding, people, tools, and technology) are devoted to the program and developing a written policy for architecture development and maintenance.

In addition, AOC has made progress toward addressing our remaining recommendations. For example, it has developed a policy that describes the procedures, practices, and guidelines that govern the management of its IT systems and the required processes that are to be followed when acquiring and developing these systems. Furthermore, AOC has taken steps toward establishing and implementing an effective information security program by designating a chief information security officer with the authority to implement an agencywide security program and by certifying and accrediting its general support systems and major applications. However, more work remains to fully implement our recommendations. For example, AOC has yet to prioritize all IT investments, develop an IT investment portfolio, and oversee each investment using a portfolio approach to ensure that AOC achieves its cost, benefit, schedule, and risk expectations. Until AOC completes these activities, it cannot ensure that the investments address not only the agency's mission and strategic goals and objectives, but also the impact of the investments on each other. Moreover, AOC has yet to fully implement key architecture practices, such as defining "as is" and "to be" architecture descriptions in terms of performance. Without instituting these practices, AOC risks limiting the quality and utility of its architecture and may not realize the benefits of a well-managed architecture program. In addition, the agency has not consistently demonstrated quality assurance, configuration management, and contract tracking and oversight processes. Until AOC consistently demonstrates these key acquisition processes, the agency runs the risk of projects not performing as intended, being delivered late, and not meeting estimated cost and schedule goals. AOC also has yet to develop system contingency plans for all of its systems and implement a security process to monitor and evaluate policy and control effectiveness. Without instituting these practices, AOC's data and systems are at risk of inadvertent or deliberate misuse, fraud, improper disclosure,

or destruction, possibly without detection. See table 4 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on IT management.

Table 4: Current Status of Recommendations on Information Technology Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. Establish a chief information officer or comparable senior executive, with the responsibility, authority, and adequate resources for managing IT across the agency, who is a full participant in AOC's senior decision-making processes and has clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (January 2004)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled this recommendation by issuing a centralized IT management policy that assigned a senior executive—namely, the Office of Information and Resource Management (OIRM) director—the role, responsibility, and authority for managing IT across the agency, including the development, management, and oversight of IT. In addition, the policy made the OIRM director a key participant in executive decision making, such as serving as the principal adviser to the Architect of the Capitol in applying IT to improve business processes. The OIRM director's role also includes controlling AOC's IT budget and chairing the IT project management board.</p>
<p>2. Develop and implement IT investment management processes with the full support and participation of AOC's senior leadership. Specifically, the Architect of the Capitol must develop a plan for developing and implementing the investment management processes, as appropriate, that are outlined in our IT investment management guide. At a minimum, the plan should specify measurable tasks, goals, time frames, and resources required to develop and implement the processes. The Architect of the Capitol should focus first on the management processes associated with controlling existing projects and establishing the management structures to effectively implement an IT management process.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled this recommendation by developing and implementing an IT investment management process with support and participation of AOC's senior leadership and in accordance with our guidance through the development and approval of an IT investment management policy. Consistent with best practices, AOC has divided its investment management process into three phases: <i>select, control, and evaluate</i>. To effectively control existing and future projects through these phases, AOC established and assigned specific roles and responsibilities to three boards: Business Systems Modernization Office (BSMO), Investment Review Board (IRB), and Project Review Board (PRB). BSMO provides guidance during the select phase on items, such as the procurement schedule and stakeholder involvement, while the IRB and the PRB participate during the select, control, and evaluate phases. In particular, the PRB reviews specific areas of the project, including status, schedule and system development life-cycle documentation, and the IRB, among other things, provides approval and advice on items, including additional funding and critical issues that may arise on the project. Membership on these boards includes senior-level officials from various departments and offices throughout the agency.</p> <p>AOC has demonstrated this investment management process as evidenced by our review of two of AOC's large-size IT systems—Facilities Management Information System (FMIS) 2005 and Inventory Control System (ICS). Both systems were approved by the appropriate management structures in accordance with AOC's IT investment management process.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>3. Plan for and implement those practices in our IT investment management guide associated with corporate, portfolio-based investment decision making, such as (1) implementing criteria to select investments that will best support the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and mission; (2) using these criteria to consistently analyze and prioritize all IT investments; (3) ensuring that the optimal investment portfolio with manageable risks and returns is selected and funded; and (4) overseeing each investment within the portfolio to ensure that it achieves its cost, benefit, schedule, and risk expectations.</p> <p>January 2004</p>	Making progress	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has begun to plan for and implement those practices in our IT investment management guide associated with corporate, portfolio-based investment decision making. AOC has developed criteria to select investments that best support the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and mission. According to AOC officials, the agency has begun the process of outlining an IT portfolio management program that will arrange IT investments into a single portfolio and provide visibility, control, and decisions on the basis of project objectives, such as costs, resources, and risks. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has yet to prioritize all IT investments, develop an IT investment portfolio, and oversee each investment from a portfolio approach to ensure that it achieves its cost, benefit, schedule, and risk expectations. <p>Until AOC completes these activities it cannot ensure that the investments address not only the agency's strategic goals, objectives, and mission, but also address the impacts that the projects have on each other.</p>
<p>4. Develop, implement, and maintain an EA to guide and constrain IT projects throughout AOC. The Architect of the Capitol should implement the practices, as appropriate, as outlined in the Chief Information Officer Council's architecture management guide. As a first step, the Architect should establish the management structure for developing, implementing, and maintaining an EA by implementing the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing an agencywide policy statement providing a clear mandate for developing, implementing, and maintaining the architecture; establishing an executive body composed of stakeholders from AOC mission-critical program offices to guide the strategy for developing the EA and ensure agency support and resources for it; and designating an individual who serves as a chief enterprise architect to develop policy, lead the development of the EA, and manage it as a formal program. <p>January 2003</p>	Implemented (February 2007)	<p>AOC has fulfilled this recommendation by developing and approving an agencywide IT policy that provides for developing, implementing, and maintaining an EA. The agency also has established an EA Executive Steering Committee, composed of senior-level officials from across the agency, to direct, oversee, and approve the AOC EA. The latest version of the EA—EA FY06 version 1.0—was approved by the executive committee in December 2005. In addition, AOC has assigned responsibility for guiding EA development to the Chief Enterprise Architect. According to program officials, the Chief Enterprise Architect position was filled in February 2007. The chief architect's responsibilities include reviewing investments and investment-related projects to ensure that they are in compliance with the EA; developing and maintaining the EA documents to ensure that they continue to reflect the AOC strategic plan, business needs, and technological advancement; and providing expertise to the business systems modernization office and AOC management on EA concepts and implementation.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>5. Plan for and implement the practices in our architecture management guide associated with leveraging an EA for organizational transformation, such as (1) ensuring that adequate resources are devoted to the program (funding, people, tools, and technology); (2) ensuring that the architecture describes both the “as is” and the “to be” environments in terms of performance; (3) ensuring that architecture business, performance, information and data, applications and services, and technology descriptions address security; and (4) ensuring that metrics are used to measure EA progress, quality, compliance, and return on investment.</p> <p>January 2004</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <p>In April 2003, we published version 1.1 of our EA management maturity framework, which is a five-stage architecture framework for managing the development, maintenance, and implementation of an architecture and understanding the extent to which effective architecture management practices are being performed and where an organization is in its progression toward having a well-managed architecture program. In short, the framework consists of 31 core elements that relate to architecture governance, content, use, and measurement. These elements reflect research by us and others showing that architecture programs should be founded upon institutional architecture commitment and capabilities, and measured and verified products and results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has made significant progress toward planning for and implementing the core elements in our architecture framework. • Specifically, AOC has fully satisfied 25 (81%), partially satisfied 4 (13%), and has not satisfied 2 (6%) of the 31 core elements identified in our EA management maturity framework. • Among the core elements that AOC has fully satisfied are ensuring that adequate resources are devoted to the program (funding, people, tools, and technology); developing a written policy for architecture development and maintenance; and measuring and reporting progress against architecture plans. • AOC has developed metrics for measuring and reporting EA progress, quality, and compliance. <p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has yet to fully implement some key elements. Specifically, AOC has yet to complete an “as is” and “to be” architecture description in terms of performance that also addresses security. • AOC has not yet implemented the measuring and reporting of EA return on investments and reported on the percentage of systems in compliance with the EA. <p>Without these core elements, AOC may face the risk of limiting the quality and utility of the architecture and may not realize the significant benefits of a well-managed architecture program.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>6. Require disciplined and rigorous processes for managing the development and acquisition of IT systems and implement the processes throughout AOC. Specifically, these processes should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality assurance processes, including developing a quality assurance plan and identifying applicable process and product standards that will be used in developing and assessing project processes and products; • configuration management processes, including establishing a repository or configuration management system to maintain and control configuration management items; • risk management processes, including developing a project risk management plan, identifying and prioritizing potential problems, implementing risk mitigation strategies, as required, and tracking and reporting progress against the plans; and • contract tracking and oversight processes, including developing a plan for tracking contractor activities, measuring contractor performance and conducting periodic reviews, and conducting internal reviews of tracking and oversight activities. <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has developed a systems development life-cycle (SDLC) policy that describes the procedures, practices, and guidelines that govern the management of IT systems and processes that are to be followed when acquiring and developing these systems. Specifically, these processes include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quality assurance process that requires the development of a quality assurance plan and several quality checkpoint reviews during a project's life cycle. • A configuration management process that requires a configuration management plan that identifies configurations at given points in time, controls changes to the configuration, and maintains the records of all changes. • A risk management process that requires the development of a risk management plan; the identification of risks, risk assessments, risk impact and status, probability of occurrence, and mitigation strategies; and the tracking and reporting of progress against the plan. For FMIS 2005 and ICS systems, AOC demonstrated its risk process by developing risk reports that included the identification, description, owner, impact, status, probability, and mitigation of the risks. • AOC also has developed and approved a policy for contract administration, which assigns authority for administering contracts to the contracting officer. Further, the agency requires a communications plan, which directs senior management and stakeholders to monitor program management activities, use a project plan to manage and control contract activities and requirements, and develop change control procedures to manage contract changes. <p>Remaining actions</p> <p>AOC has not consistently demonstrated quality assurance, configuration management, and contract tracking and oversight processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although AOC developed quality assurance plans, not all quality checkpoint reviews were completed to ensure that the projects met the contractual agreements and quality standards or complied with SDLC processes. According to officials, quality checkpoint reviews were determined a best practice and developed in June 2006 and, therefore, had occurred after the implementation of the FMIS 2005 system. • For configuration management, although AOC had developed a configuration management plan for the ICS system, it did not develop a plan for the FMIS 2005 system and did not control and maintain project changes for both systems.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>7. Establish and implement an information security program. Specifically, the Architect of the Capitol should establish an information security program by taking the following steps:</p> <p>(1) designate a security officer and provide him or her with the authority and resources to implement an agencywide security program,</p> <p>(2) develop and implement policy and guidance to perform risk assessments continually,</p> <p>(3) use the results of the risk assessments to develop and implement the appropriate controls,</p> <p>(4) develop policies for security training and awareness and provide the training, and</p> <p>(5) monitor and evaluate policy and control effectiveness.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	Making progress	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although AOC has a policy for contract administration, it has not developed and implemented contract tracking and oversight processes that include measuring contractor performance by developing and using metrics of software and system quality. Development and use of such metrics is a recognized best practice. For example, a communications plan was not developed for FMIS 2005 and metrics were not developed and used to measure product quality for both FMIS and ICS. <p>Until AOC consistently demonstrates these key acquisition processes, the agency runs the risk of projects not performing as intended, being delivered late, and not meeting estimated cost and schedule goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has designated the chief information security officer with the authority to implement an agencywide security program and has reported that adequate resources (funding and staff) have been assigned to implement the program. • AOC designated a chief information security officer in January 2007. • AOC also has developed a policy to perform risk assessments on 50 major applications by March 2008. • In March 2006, AOC completed its certification and accreditation of its general support systems and major applications and, according to officials, findings from the risk assessment have been placed into a plan of action and milestones, as a control measure, to track the corrective actions taken by the agency. • According to AOC, it is on target in certifying and accrediting mission-critical applications by March 2007 and mission-support and essential applications by March 2008. • AOC also has developed and issued policies for security and awareness training, which, according to the agency officials, has been completed by all employees. • Additionally, AOC has developed a process to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies and controls.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
		Remaining actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AOC has yet to implement the process of monitoring and evaluating policy and control effectiveness or to provide us with evidence that training is based on user roles and responsibilities, and that identified risks are being documented in system security plans. These practices are important because if they are not in place, AOC's data and systems are at risk of inadvertent or deliberate misuse, fraud, improper disclosure, or destruction, possibly without detection.• Additionally, system contingency plans have yet to be developed for all systems.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Project Management

AOC has made progress on several initiatives that should improve project management and accountability and has implemented 7 project management recommendations over the year. For example, AOC has established performance measures, including measures to track the quality and costs of projects. AOC also has clarified the roles and responsibilities for staff in the Project Management Division and updated guidance for managing projects. In addition, AOC is continuing efforts on longer-term initiatives to improve project management and accountability. For example, AOC plans to modify its project information system to assist managers in more proactively managing projects, provide needed cost and schedule data on projects, and track reasons for changes across all projects. AOC has developed the requirements for this system, which includes the automation of AOC's quarterly construction projects progress report, and plans to begin modifications with available in-house resources in fiscal year 2007. Additionally, AOC has conducted a review of Construction Division operations and management in 2006 and is currently implementing the recommendations from that review, including recommendations to improve project cost estimating and tracking. However, the new cost accounting system—a system that will be phased in over several years—must be completed before AOC can implement all of the recommendations intended to improve accountability for the Construction Division. Furthermore, AOC is reviewing its methods for estimating Construction Division project costs, including contingency costs and allocations for construction management and administration, to improve the accuracy of project cost estimates. AOC also is finalizing the Capitol complex master plan and anticipates that a draft of the plan will be ready for congressional review in the spring of 2007. See table 5 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on project management.

Table 5: Current Status of Recommendations on Project Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. Develop a Capitol complex master plan and complete condition assessments of all buildings and facilities under the jurisdiction of AOC. January 2003</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Capitol complex master plan has three components—the vision statement, framework (concept) plan, and jurisdiction plans. • AOC is working with the leadership of each jurisdiction (e.g., the Librarian of Congress and the Marshal of the Supreme Court) and the consultant working on the plan to finalize these documents for consultation with congressional stakeholders. • As we reported last year, AOC has completed facility condition assessments for all facilities within the complex, except the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court. <p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to finalize the Capitol complex master plan. We reported last year that the master plan was scheduled to be completed at the end of 2006. AOC told us that the plan was delayed to obtain additional input from within the agency and the new congressional leadership. AOC estimates that a draft of the plan will be ready for congressional review in the spring of 2007. • AOC needs to complete the facility condition assessment for the Library of Congress and has requested funding for that assessment in its fiscal year 2007 and 2008 budget. • AOC needs to complete the facility condition assessment for the Supreme Court and plans to do so when renovations of the Supreme Court are completed. The renovations are estimated to be completed in 2009.
<p>2. To improve Capitol complex master planning efforts, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol, with support from the COO, lead efforts to ensure that congressional and other stakeholders are engaged early and throughout the development of the Capitol complex master plan. August 2004</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has involved congressional stakeholders and AOC stakeholders in the development of the Capitol complex master plan. • AOC's planning team has met with Senate Rules committee staff and House leadership staff to discuss a strategy for communication and outreach related to the master plan. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to formulate and carry out a communication and outreach strategy for vetting the master plan. AOC expects to formulate this strategy in early 2007 and vet the master plan between April and June 2007.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>3. Develop a process for assigning project priorities that is based on clearly defined, well-documented, consistently applied, and transparent criteria.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC implemented a program development process in 2003 that rated projects in the following five categories: (1) historic preservation and stewardship; (2) fire, life, safety, and code compliance; (3) impact on mission; (4) economics; and (5) security, with a score from 1 to 100. In the spring of 2004, AOC improved the program development process by establishing extensive procedures designed to ensure that project scopes fully met both customer needs and all criteria and standards. The project evaluation criteria are currently being expanded to include urgency (such as immediate, high, medium, or low) and classification of a project (such as deferred maintenance or capital improvement). This expansion of the evaluation criteria results from information being received from facility condition assessments. In September 2005, the AOC's project prioritization panel will evaluate these recommended changes.</p>
<p>4. To improve the process for prioritizing projects, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol, with support from the COO, lead efforts to ensure that AOC informs and obtains agreement from congressional and other stakeholders on how and why specific projects are submitted for funding.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC fulfilled this recommendation by taking steps to inform congressional stakeholders on how and why specific projects are submitted for funding. For example, AOC has held and continues to hold regular briefings with congressional staff on AOC's funding requests and project prioritization process. In August and September 2006, AOC briefed congressional stakeholders on the status and results of facility condition assessments, its project prioritization process, and the future direction of AOC's facility programs. Congressional stakeholders noted that AOC has made improvements in developing a transparent process for understanding how and why projects are submitted for funding.</p>
<p>5. Develop tools to effectively communicate priorities and progress of projects, as a part of a broader communication strategy.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has established tools to effectively communicate priorities and progress of projects. For example, AOC has developed and continues to communicate its project prioritization processes through regular briefings to congressional stakeholders. According to feedback from congressional and other stakeholders, AOC made changes to the project prioritization process and plans to implement those changes in its fiscal year 2008 budget proposal. AOC continues to produce a quarterly status report on the budget and schedule status of projects that are released to congressional appropriators.</p>
<p>6. Define project-management-related performance measures to achieve mission-critical strategic and annual performance goals.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has defined project-management-related performance measures through its quarterly status report, dashboard, and performance plan. These measures include the status of project schedule, budget, cost, and safety. AOC also developed and implemented surveys on the quality of design and construction services. AOC could consider tracking the safety of its construction contractors, as is currently being done with the Capitol Visitor Center project.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>7. To strengthen the relationship between AOC and its congressional and other stakeholders, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO to work with Congress on the design and implementation of a transparent process to facilitate an understanding between AOC and its congressional stakeholders about how AOC targets its efforts and resources to the highest project priorities and how strategic and tactical decisions and trade-offs are made.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC fulfilled this recommendation by taking steps to develop and implement a transparent process for how AOC targets its efforts and resources to highest project priorities. AOC continues to meet with congressional stakeholders to discuss how it targets its resources and prioritizes projects. On the basis of its experience in evaluating projects for the fiscal year 2007 budget and input from congressional and other stakeholders, AOC revised its project prioritization process to more clearly articulate the criteria for assigning project ratings. In October 2006, AOC prepared an interim project prioritization guide to facilitate the prioritization of projects for the fiscal year 2008 budget submission. AOC issued a revised guide in February 2007. Congressional stakeholders noted that AOC has made improvements in developing a transparent process for understanding how and why projects are submitted for funding.</p>
<p>8. Align project management staff and resources with AOC's mission-critical goals.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>In October 2005, AOC implemented a project management organization. The organization includes 32 personnel with responsibilities for project management, construction management, and inspection. The organization is focused on "cradle-to-grave" project delivery. Duties considered to be "collateral," such as design reviews, are being reassigned to other AOC officials outside of the new organization.</p>
<p>9. Develop a method to establish and track more accurate budget targets. This method could include tracking and reporting on the following to help AOC refine targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy of cost estimates compared with bids; • accuracy of budget compared with final project costs; • amount of excess project funds and how funds are used; and • cost data for the Construction Branch (which is within the Construction Division), including current working estimates. <p>September 2005</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has established additional measures that should help the agency develop and track more accurate budget targets for projects. • In addition to measures for (1) the ratio of the government estimate to the average of the bid amount and (2) the contract award cost versus the government estimate, AOC has implemented the use of a project closeout sheet that project managers are required to complete at the conclusion of each project. The sheet includes information on the accuracy of the budget compared with final project costs and the disposition of excess project funds. <p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC must develop the capability to better track cost data for the Construction Division, including current working estimates for projects conducted by the division. A peer review group within AOC issued recommendations in April 2006 designed to improve the agency's ability to track cost data for the division, including standardizing the cost estimating process. • AOC is also reviewing its methods for estimating Construction Division project costs, including contingency costs and allocations for construction management and administration, to improve the accuracy of project cost estimates.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
10. Expedite the development of a customer satisfaction survey for construction services. September 2005	Implemented (February 2007)	AOC completed the development of its customer satisfaction survey for construction services in March 2006.
11. Clarify roles and responsibilities of staff, including the role of jurisdictional executives and responsibility for developing Programs of Requirements. September 2005	Implemented (February 2007)	AOC defined roles and responsibilities and completed position descriptions for the jurisdictional executives, project managers, and construction managers. AOC has discussed and plans to continue discussing these roles and responsibilities at its staff meetings and individually with the jurisdictional executives, project managers, and construction managers.
12. Revise project management manuals to reflect changes in how AOC plans for, designs, and constructs projects; develop management controls to ensure compliance with manuals. September 2005	Implemented (February 2007)	AOC has identified revisions for and continuously revises its project management manuals. These manuals are made available through AOC's internal network. AOC tracks compliance with the manuals through its project performance measures.
13. Develop or modify information systems to provide needed cost and schedule data on projects and track reasons for changes across all projects. September 2005	Making progress	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC currently tracks cost and schedule data and reasons for changes across all projects in its quarterly status report—a report that is manually prepared and not supported by AOC's current information systems. AOC's steering group, the Project Information Center Business Reengineering Task Force, identified AOC's project information system requirements, which includes the automation of AOC's quarterly construction projects progress report. AOC officials noted that reengineering of the project information system is one of AOC's top project management priorities for AOC. AOC requested funding for an assessment of the current system in its fiscal year 2007 budget. In the interim, AOC plans to begin modifying the current project information system with available in-house resources in fiscal year 2007 and requested funding for further modifications in its fiscal year 2008 budget. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC needs to complete the modification of its project information system to assist managers in more proactively managing projects, provide needed cost and schedule data on projects, and track reasons for changes across all projects.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Facilities Management

AOC has taken steps to improve how it measures performance and tracks demand work orders. For example, in May 2006, AOC began implementing a new facilities management information system that will enhance its tracking and reporting capabilities. Currently, all jurisdictions are using the new system to track demand work orders. As implementation continues, AOC plans to continue analyzing its workload data to develop metrics for the new system. Additionally, AOC officials plan to benchmark AOC's performance measures with peer organizations. These officials said that they used the International Facilities Management Association's key performance indicators to develop performance measures for AOC's revised strategic plan. While these are important steps, AOC must complete the development of its metrics and input its preventive maintenance work orders before it can more accurately track performance. Furthermore, the new facilities management information system must be used in conjunction with the new cost accounting system—a system that will be phased in over several years—before AOC will be able to fully use data provided by the new facilities management information system. See table 6 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on facilities management.

Table 6: Current Status of Recommendations on Facilities Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. To improve how AOC measures its performance in the areas of timeliness and cost, the agency should do the following: develop more specific timeliness measures that more accurately reflect the amount of time required to complete tasks; develop the capability to comprehensively and routinely track cost performance measures; and benchmark performance measures against those of similar institutions, such as the Smithsonian Institution and state capitols.</p> <p>December 2005</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop more specific timeliness measures, AOC made timeliness a requirement in the system specifications for the new facilities management information system—a system that is currently being implemented. Although this new system currently has the capability to collect data as granular as needed, AOC has not been collecting data at a level less than 30 days. AOC plans to assess whether there is a need for data in other timeliness categories. As part of the implementation process for the new system, AOC officials told us they are collecting and analyzing data on their workload to develop more accurate metrics.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>2. Use the new facilities management information system to track preventive maintenance and demand work orders across all jurisdictions, including the time taken to complete work orders.</p> <p>December 2005</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To benchmark performance measures, AOC has plans to reach out to peer organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution and Texas state capital. AOC officials told us that that they used the International Facilities Management Association's operations and maintenance benchmarks to develop performance measures for AOC's revised strategic plan. <p>Remaining actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to continue analyzing its workload data to develop more accurate timeliness and cost metrics. • Although AOC continues to develop more accurate cost metrics, the new facilities management information system must be used in conjunction with the new cost accounting system—a system that will be phased in over several years—before AOC will be able to fully use data provided by the facilities management information system. • AOC needs to continue with its benchmarking efforts with peer organizations. <hr/> <p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, all AOC jurisdictions are using the new facilities management information system to track demand work orders. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to input its preventive maintenance work orders into the new facilities management information system to improve the tracking of these work orders across all jurisdictions. According to AOC, these work orders will be implemented case by case, on the basis of funding and data availability.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Worker Safety

AOC has taken steps to improve worker safety and has implemented 1 worker safety recommendation over the past year. Specifically, AOC has implemented 7 of 34 specialized safety policies,² completed a job hazard analysis process to identify hazards, and implemented a system to track investigations of incidents and follow-up. AOC also has selected a data management system that will track and record employee training, licensing, and certification and clarified the role of the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP), including having OAP provide reports to AOC jurisdictions when employees are due or past due for their medical surveillance examinations. Overall, AOC's injury and illness rate declined from 17.9 in fiscal year 2000 to 4.9 in fiscal year 2006. However, several critical actions remain to further improve worker safety. For example, AOC will not be able to fully achieve its goal of long-term cultural change until it fully implements the specialized safety policies, which current draft plans indicate will not occur until the end of fiscal year 2009. AOC also needs to align its training system with its system to track and identify corrective actions for hazards and incidents in order to target training needs to address high-risk areas. Finally, although AOC added worker safety as a standard topic in its biennial employee focus group script, AOC needs a more rigorous (and anonymous) approach to measuring employee's perceptions of AOC's safety climate, which may identify successful strategies to expand and areas that need focused attention to improve. See table 7 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on worker safety.

While AOC is making progress in improving worker safety, in March 2006, the utility tunnel workers sent a letter to Congress complaining of unsafe working conditions in the tunnels, including falling concrete, asbestos, and extreme heat. In February 2006, the Office of Compliance (OOC) filed a complaint against AOC concerning hazards in the tunnels, including falling concrete, an inadequate communication system for these confined spaces, and inadequate escape exits. AOC has taken steps to address these issues—including establishing safety and access procedures for the tunnels and upgrading 15 tunnel entry and exit points—and continues to work with the tunnel workers and the OOC to address these issues.

²AOC reduced the number of specialized safety policies from 43 to 34.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

Table 7: Current Status of Recommendations on Worker Safety

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining actions
<p>1. Identify performance measures for safety goals and objectives, including measures for how AOC will implement the 43 specialized safety programs and how superintendents and employees will be held accountable for achieving results.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of December 2006, AOC's plan is to consolidate individual safety policies into a safety manual (with a tentative completion date of December 31, 2007). The individual safety policies, which now number 34, remain at various stages of implementation. Seven policies have been implemented; AOC has identified draft implementation dates for the remaining policies, ranging from September 2007 to September 2009. In addition to these 34, AOC has implemented 2 additional safety policies covering safety meetings among senior management officials (Safety, Health, and Environment Council (SHEC)) and jurisdiction-level officials (Jurisdiction Occupational Safety and Health Committees). AOC has developed workbooks to help AOC staff implement the safety policies. AOC employee evaluations contain a broad safety evaluation criterion, which can be customized to individual employees. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has yet to fully implement the safety policies. AOC plans to complete its safety manual by the end of calendar year 2007. It has developed draft plans to finish implementing the policies by the end of fiscal year 2009.
<p>2. Establish clearly defined and documented policies and procedures for reporting hazards similar to those that apply to injury and illness reporting.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC has completed a job hazard analysis (JHA) process including describing the steps associated with each job task, identifying potential hazards associated with each task, developing the appropriate controls to eliminate or reduce the hazards, developing a training program to perform JHAs, and assisting first-line supervisors with performing qualitative JHAs. In addition, AOC has completed a "step-by-step plan" that provides a general approach for jurisdictions to manage their implementation of the JHA process. Finally, AOC has included a telephone number for reporting hazards in its monthly safety newsletters, which are distributed AOC-wide. The Architect has approved the Hazard Assessment and Control Policy.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining actions
3. Establish a consistent AOC-wide system for conducting investigations and follow-up. January 2003	Implemented (February 2006)	AOC has fulfilled this recommendation with the approval of its interim incident notification, investigation, and reporting policy. AOC also implemented the incident analysis module, a component of the facility management assistant program. This module provides an electronic recordkeeping approach to track the investigation of incidents associated with AOC personnel and property. In addition, the module interfaces with the facility management assistant program by creating a deficiency report when corrective actions associated with an incident are identified. Moreover, an AOC-wide incident investigation form has been implemented across the jurisdictions. Finally, lessons learned are shared in a number of ways, including through AOC's safety support group.
4. Establish a safety-training curriculum that fully supports all of the goals of the safety program and further evaluate the effectiveness of the training provided. January 2003	Implemented (February 2006)	AOC has fulfilled this recommendation in establishing training that supports the goals of the current safety policies. For example, during the implementation review process, AOC revalidated training requirements against regulatory requirements. Moreover, Safety Policy Managers have worked with the Human Resources Management Division to ensure that training required by upcoming policies has been identified. In addition, AOC has completed a training workbook exercise to assess the overall impact of required safety policy training on its budget. Also, central staff safety professionals continue to audit training courses and provide feedback to course instructors. Finally, AOC has been using injury and illness data to identify training needs.
5. Assign clear responsibility for tracking and recording training received by AOC employees, including maintaining an inventory of employees' certifications and licenses. January 2003	Making progress	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has chosen a data management system—AVUE—that will, among other things, track and record employee training, licensing, and certification. Safety personnel have met with AVUE designers to ensure that the designers fully understand AOC's safety training needs. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC needs to develop AVUE's capacity to track employee training. AOC expects to implement the first phase of AVUE in July 2007. This phase would establish an automated training request and approval process. The second phase of AVUE implementation will expand the system's capacity to track required training, licenses, and certification, but AOC has not set a specific completion date for the second phase.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining actions
<p>6. Clarify and explore the possibility of expanding the role of the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP) in helping AOC meet its safety goals, consistent with the broad responsibilities laid out in the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding between AOC and OAP.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled this recommendation by working with OAP to ensure that the lists of medical surveillance program participants are current. In addition, OAP is providing reports to AOC jurisdictions when employees are either (1) due or (2) past due for their medical surveillance examinations. AOC is also drafting a document on the scope of medical surveillance services to better define and communicate the agency's requirements to OAP to ensure a common understanding and set of expectations.</p>
<p>7. Establish a senior management work group that will routinely discuss workers' compensation cases and costs, and develop strategies to reduce these injuries and costs.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (August 2004)</p>	<p>AOC has fulfilled this recommendation by developing performance measures to assess the long-term impact and trends of workers' compensation injuries and costs. In addition, through SHEC, safety and human resource officials are exchanging information and data to control workers' compensation injuries and costs. Finally, through SHEC, the relationship between safety and workers' compensation injuries and illnesses is being promoted.</p>
<p>8. To enhance worker safety performance measures at AOC, the Architect of the Capitol should direct the COO to expand upon its safety perception survey by developing a more rigorous methodological approach and collecting such information on a more regular basis.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC has added worker safety as a standard topic in its biennial focus group script, indicated it conducts daily shop safety meetings, and included a telephone number for reporting hazards in its monthly safety newsletters. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOC needs to adopt a more rigorous (and anonymous) approach to measuring employee's perceptions of AOC's safety climate—perceptions, for example, of management commitment, discipline policies, and hazard corrections—that could help AOC identify successful strategies for application to other areas as well as areas that need focused attention to improve.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Capitol Power Plant Management

AOC has made progress in improving CPP management³ and efficiently staffing the modernized power plant, but more work remains. For example, AOC took interim steps to modify existing positions—as they have been vacated—to reflect the additional skill sets required to successfully operate and maintain the modernized plant. Since October 2005, AOC has been working with a consultant to develop a new workload analysis and staffing implementation plan and received the results of the analysis and recommendations in November 2006. On the basis of these results, AOC is developing a reorganization plan to reflect the recommendations, which it expects to submit to Congress for approval in March 2007. In anticipation of the staffing changes, AOC has been using attrition to reduce and realign the CPP workforce and is currently keeping seven vacated positions vacant, four of which will be filled by internal candidates and will not impact the staffing numbers. See table 8 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on CPP management.

Table 8: Current Status of Recommendations on CPP Management

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. By the end of fiscal year 2005, AOC should develop an implementation plan for adopting its consultant's November 2004 recommendations without decreasing system reliability or violating environmental air permits that are in effect. The consultant's report recommended that AOC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the most economically priced fuel to operate the steam boilers and • reduce current CPP staff from 88 positions to 46 positions. <p>April 2005^a</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC evaluates and adjusts fuel sources on an ongoing basis to use the most economically priced fuel. • AOC has worked with a contractor to develop a new workload analysis and staffing implementation plan. The workload analysis, completed in November 2006, recommends a reduction in staff, and AOC is developing a reorganization plan. • AOC also has been using attrition to reduce and realign the CPP workforce in anticipation of recommended changes. For example, seven vacated positions are currently being kept vacant, four of which will be filled by internal candidates and will not affect CPP's staffing numbers. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to develop and implement a staffing plan that is based on the recommendations from the recent consultant's study.

³As previously reported, we also reported on CPP's 2004 master plan during this same time period. Due to its security sensitive nature, we did not include it in this report.

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>2. AOC should not wait to implement prudent operational and incremental organizational changes in anticipation of a more permanent organization when the West Refrigeration Plant Expansion project is complete. If carefully planned, anticipated workforce reductions can be managed in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts. Workforce planning can result in CPP employees being placed in other AOC organizations and can account for natural attrition by considering the retirement eligibility of current employees.</p> <p>April 2005^a</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2007)</p>	<p>AOC fulfilled our recommendation to implement prudent operational and incremental organizational changes in anticipation of a more permanent organization when the West Refrigeration Plant Expansion project is complete. In January 2007, the CPP took use and possession of the new West Refrigeration Plant Expansion chiller systems to support the campus cooling loads. The West Refrigeration Plant Expansion project is scheduled to finish in June 2007, but the construction contract will remain open until the Boiler House Distributed Control System project is completed in January 2008. To implement incremental organizational changes, AOC indicated that it has taken steps to modify existing positions—as they have been vacated—to reflect the additional skill sets required to successfully operate and maintain the modernized plant. These steps are intermediate to permanent staffing changes that are expected to be made once AOC implements the staffing plan outlined in its November 2006 consultant's report. Moreover, the completion of AOC's staffing study, which includes a phased implementation plan to achieve CPP's permanent organizational structure, supersedes the need to make interim changes. Accordingly, we expect AOC to take no further action to implement this recommendation.</p>
<p>3. To ensure that CPP is staffed efficiently and that CPP personnel are trained to operate the modernized power plant safely, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and implement a staffing plan for CPP that is based on the results of its most recent consultant's study and • evaluate the training provided to CPP operators and use the evaluation results in implementing the staffing plan. <p>February 2006^b</p>	<p>Making progress</p>	<p>Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC has worked with a consultant to develop a new workload analysis and staffing implementation plan. The consultant issued the results of the study in November 2006. On the basis of these results, AOC is developing a reorganization proposal, which it expects to deliver to Congress for approval in March 2007. • The consultant also evaluated the operator training program and is preparing its evaluation report. AOC expects to receive the results of the evaluation by early March 2007. <p>Remaining action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AOC needs to develop and implement a staffing plan for CPP and incorporate the results of the training evaluation.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

^aGAO, *Capitol Power Plant: Actions Needed to Improve Operating Efficiency* (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 8, 2005), issued as unnumbered correspondence.

^bGAO, *Architect of the Capitol: Addressing Staffing and Training Issues Is Important for Efficient and Safe West Refrigeration Plant Operations*, [GAO-06-321R](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 10, 2006).

Recycling

AOC has implemented the recommendations related to developing a strategic approach to recycling. In January 2006, AOC finalized its recycling program mission, goals, and performance measures. The performance measures are also in AOC's revised strategic plan and the Senate and House business plans. To monitor performance, AOC reports on the status of its recycling performance measures in the quarterly Safety, Health, and Environmental Council meetings. Additionally, AOC formed a Legislative Branch recycling group that met for the first time in September 2006. This group plans to meet quarterly to discuss common issues and best management practices. To clarify responsibilities and hold staff accountable for achieving recycling goals, AOC has included recycling tasks in its position descriptions and included recycling responsibilities for recycling managers and supervisors in its evaluation system. For example, the performance evaluation system includes recycling objectives in the ratings of Senate and House recycling managers to hold them accountable for program results. See table 9 for more information on the implementation status of our recommendations on recycling.

Table 9: Current Status of Recommendations on Recycling

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
<p>1. Develop a clear mission and goals for AOC's recycling program with input from key congressional stakeholders as part of its proposed environmental master plan. AOC may want to establish reasonable goals on the basis of the total waste stream—information it plans to obtain as part of its long-term environmental management plan—that could potentially be recycled.</p> <p>January 2003</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC drafted a mission statement, goals, and performance measures for its recycling program and shared this draft with congressional stakeholders. The mission for the recycling program is to foster an environment that encourages recycling by the legislative branch staff through convenient and efficient programs, resulting in the diversion of wastes from the solid waste stream. AOC established three main goals for its recycling program: (1) increase overall recycling rates by diverting office wastes, (2) increase overall recycling tonnage by diverting nonoffice wastes, and (3) improving communication and coordination among interested legislative branch agencies by establishing a recycling working group by the end of fiscal year 2006.</p>
<p>2. To further assist AOC in developing a more strategic approach for its recycling programs and to ensure that congressional input is obtained when it would be most useful, we recommend that the Architect of the Capitol direct the COO to obtain preliminary input from congressional stakeholders on its environmental program plan—particularly as the plan relates to the mission and goals of AOC's recycling programs—prior to the completion of the plan.</p> <p>August 2004</p>	<p>Implemented (February 2006)</p>	<p>AOC relied on input from internal and external stakeholders, including congressional stakeholders, to assist in the development of the mission, goals, and performance measures as part of its recycling program.</p>

Appendix I: Status of AOC's Progress on Recommendations

GAO recommendation and date of the recommendation	Status (month/year of GAO report)	Progress and remaining action
3. Develop a performance measurement, monitoring, and evaluation system that supports accomplishing AOC's recycling mission and goals. January 2003	Implemented (February 2007)	AOC has established a performance measurement, monitoring, and evaluation system that supports its recycling mission and goals. AOC finalized its recycling program mission, goals, and performance measures in January 2006. These performance measures are in AOC's revised strategic plan and the Senate and House business plans. To monitor performance, AOC reports on the status of its recycling performance measures in the Safety, Health, and Environmental Council meetings. Additionally, AOC formed a Legislative Branch recycling group that met for the first time in September 2006. This group plans to meet quarterly to discuss common issues and share best management practices.
4. Examine the roles and responsibilities of AOC's recycling program staff to ensure that they are performing the right jobs with the necessary authority, and holding the staff accountable for achieving program and agency results through AOC's performance management system. January 2003	Implemented (February 2007)	AOC included recycling tasks in its position descriptions and included recycling responsibilities for recycling managers and supervisors in its evaluation system. For example, the performance evaluation system includes recycling objectives in the ratings of Senate and House recycling managers to hold them accountable for program results.

Source: GAO analysis of AOC data.

Appendix II: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, key contributors to this report were Shirley L. Abel, Mark Bird, John C. Craig, Elizabeth Curda, Amr Desouky, Elizabeth R. Eisenstadt, Elena P. Epps, Brett S. Fallavollita, Jeanette M. Franzel, Mary Hatcher, Randolph C. Hite, Heather Krause, Neelaxi Lakhmani, Steven G. Lozano, Valerie Melvin, David Merrill, Susan Michal-Smith, Sara Ann Moessbauer, Stephanie Sand, Natalie Schneider, Bernice Steinhardt, John J. Reilly, Jr., Sarah E. Veale, Sara Vermillion, and Merry Woo.

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